Origins and Ideologies of the American Revolution
Part I
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Professor Mancall has taught at the University of Southern California since 2001. After receiving his A.B. degree
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Dr. Mancall is the author of *Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800*
(Cornell, 1991); *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Cornell, 1995); *At the Edge of Empire:
The Backcountry in British North America* (co-author, Johns Hopkins, 2003); and *Hakluyt’s Promise* (Yale, 2007).
He is the editor of *Envisioning America: English Plans for the Colonization of North America, 1580 to 1640*
(Bedford/St. Martin’s, 1995); *Land of Rivers: America in Word and Image*, with a foreword by Edward Hoagland
(Cornell, 1996); *American Eras: Westward Expansion* (Gale, 1999); *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers
from Contact to Removal* (co-editor, Routledge, 2000); *American Nations: Encounters in Indian Country* (co-editor,
Routledge, 2001); *Three Worlds Meet* (2003), volume I of the *Facts on File Encyclopedia of American History*
(chosen as a best reference book of the year by RUSA/ALA, Booklist/RBB, and *Library Journal* as well as a
*Choice* Outstanding Academic Title); *Travel Narratives from the Age of Discovery* (Oxford, 2006); and *The Atlantic
World and Virginia* (University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and
Culture, to be published in 2007). In 1999, Dr. Mancall and the economic historian Tom Weiss won a Program in
the Early American Economy and Society prize for early American economic history.

Dr. Mancall’s work has been featured on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” and in the *Chronicle of
Higher Education* and it has been reviewed in journals in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and
across Europe. In 1998, after his work had come to the attention of the World Health Organization, Dr. Mancall was
the inaugural ALAC Research Fellow of the Health Research Centre of New Zealand. His research has been
supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and the American
Philosophical Society, among others. He has consulted with movie studios about documentary and feature films and
has been filmed for a four-part international documentary on the history of genocide. Dr. Mancall regularly consults
with teachers from the Los Angeles Unified School District through the Teaching American History program and is
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He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, the medieval historian Lisa Bitel, and their two children.
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Origins and Ideologies of the American Revolution

Scope:

The American Revolution was the most important event in our country’s history. What began as a protest movement against relatively minor taxes in the 1760s became by 1776 a movement for independence cloaked in the rhetoric of universal equality. By the time the new century opened, the Revolution had spawned a federal system of government and a bill of rights that remain at the heart of the United States today.

This 18th-century revolution was not based on self-interest, class conflict, or partisan politics. Instead it grew from several core ideas, all expressed to some extent in the Declaration of Independence: equality of all people, the ability to pursue one’s own path without undue government burdens, and the desire to live free of tyranny. American revolutionaries redefined the relationship between the individual and the state. After 1776, Americans were no longer subjects of a monarch. They had become sovereign citizens of a nation who granted to governments specified powers to maintain order and promote the common good.

This course emphasizes the role of ideas in the age of the American Revolution. After analyzing how ideas circulated in the American colonies and more broadly in the Atlantic world (Lecture Two), and surveying the population of the colonies and their place in the Atlantic community (Lectures Three through Five), the course moves chronologically through the major developments of the period from 1760 to 1800. The origins of the Revolution can be seen in the changes in the workings of the empire after victory in the Seven Years’ War (Lecture Six) and the shifts in British politics with the accession of King George III (Lectures Seven through Nine). The first glimmer of what became the Revolution appeared in a Boston courtroom in 1761, when the lawyer James Otis took the case of merchants who would rather smuggle goods into port than pay duties on them (Lecture Ten). From that improbable beginning, a resistance movement began to grow across the Anglo-American mainland colonies, and especially in Massachusetts.

During the early 1760s, the British government, faced with high debts from the Seven Years’ War, tried to raise funds by taxing its American colonists (Lecture Eleven). The colonists for their part protested at each stage, often expressing their concerns in pamphlets and newspaper articles that revealed a deep understanding of political theory and history. By 1765, colonists had taken to the streets to protest the Stamp Act (Lecture Twelve), prompting Parliament to repeal the odious measure but to pass new legislation declaring its unlimited right to pass legislation for the colonies (Lecture Thirteen). Over the next five years, political attitudes hardened on both sides (Lectures Fourteen and Fifteen), even as Benjamin Franklin sought ways to ease the crisis (Lecture Sixteen). In 1768, British soldiers arrived in Boston, and two years later, some of them killed five Americans in the so-called “Boston Massacre,” an event that quickly took on unprecedented notoriety through rebels’ efforts to publicize it (Lecture Seventeen).

By the middle of the 1770s, colonists and the British, despite many efforts by both sides to reduce tensions, were at war (Lectures Eighteen through Twenty-Two). Common Sense, a pamphlet by the recent immigrant Thomas Paine, became the widest circulated political tract of its time despite, or perhaps because of, prose so inflammatory that even the revolutionary John Adams questioned its validity (Lecture Twenty-Three). Soon after its publication, the British moved their base of operations from Boston to New York, where they remained until the end of the war (Lecture Twenty-Four).

It was not until July 1776 that the colonists, having reached the conclusion that George III was a tyrant, made a formal declaration of their desire to be a separate nation (Lecture Twenty-Five). Even then there was no consensus on the part of Americans about what the “United States” would look like. As war spread through eastern North America, military hostilities became a form of political education for Americans, who soon became all-too-familiar with epochal scenes of a nascent national drama. Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Princeton, Trenton, Saratoga, and Valley Forge all entered the consciousness of the American people (Lectures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven). In the midst of reports of battles against a far more powerful army, supported by the strongest Atlantic fleet of its time, ordinary Americans also learned about the ideas that motivated and sustained the movement for independence.

During the war Americans, who were not even sure they would emerge victorious, set about to create their own governments. They began at the state level, drafting constitutions intended to become fundamental laws. These constitutions laid out how governments were to operate and explained why such governments were legitimate expressions of the will of the people (Lecture Twenty-Eight). At the same time Thomas Jefferson drafted a statute
for religious freedom for Virginia, a state act that remains perhaps the most significant legislation of the founding era (Lecture Twenty-Nine). Some Americans also began work on plans for a national government, though that remained a secondary concern until the war ended. Despite an alliance with France (Lecture Thirty) and the creation of a plan for a national government (Lecture Thirty-One), the war ground on until the British surrender at Yorktown (Lecture Thirty-Two) and the signing of the peace treaty in Paris in 1783 (Lecture Thirty-Three).

The end of the war did not solve the new nation’s problems. During the 1780s, the United States faced a series of crises (Lecture thirty-four) and slavery remained a dominant social and economic institution throughout the south despite the fact that its continued existence stood in stark contrast to central ideals of the Revolution (Lecture Thirty-Five). By the middle of the 1780s, discussion about the need for a better organized national system led to the calling of what became the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 (Lecture Thirty-Six). Those in attendance tried to devise a system that would recognize the sovereignty of each state while at the same time forging a union that would bring them together. When leaders of that congress finally produced a document, Americans entered into the most sustained debate about the nature of power in their history. Their discussion produced brilliant assessments of human character and ideas about the ways to control personal ambition for the good of the whole. Many thoughtful Americans, including some who had battled against the British, believed that the Constitution was a recipe for the rise of a new kind of tyrant. But the document was ratified because its proponents, including the authors of The Federalist papers, devised rhetoric sufficient to assuage reasonable fears. Nonetheless, by the early 1790s even James Madison, the primary architect of the Constitution, recognized the need for a series of amendments known as the Bill of Rights, which provided further protection for individuals against government abuses (Lectures Thirty-Eight through Forty).

The greatest documents of the Revolutionary age—the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, and the Constitution with its Bill of Rights—spoke a universal language. These statements of political ideals and American identity pointed to a bright national future. Few could have anticipated the political struggles that subsequently divided Americans during the 1790s (Lectures Forty-One and Forty-Two), but the election of 1800 (Lecture Forty-Three) demonstrated that the system created by the Revolution could withstand the shift from one political party to another. By then it was clear that the rebellion had a mixed legacy; neither Native Americans nor women were able to share in its benefits at the time, nor did it lead to the equalization of property in the society (Lectures Forty-Four through Forty-Six). The Revolution’s immediate effects could be seen in the views of some of those who lived through it and provided posterity with descriptions of how it changed American society (Lecture Forty-Seven). Despite its limitations, the Revolution established an ideology of expansive liberty, which Americans turned to in virtually all later efforts to improve their condition (Lecture Forty-Eight). We continue to do so today.
Lecture One
Self-Evident Truths

Scope: This course will, to use the words of the Revolutionary historian Mercy Otis Warren, trace the “rise, progress, and termination” of the American Revolution. Many of the most important ideas of the Revolutionary generation emerged in the period from 1761 to 1776, the years that witnessed the rise of a resistance movement against King George III. These ideas evolved further during the war years, from 1775 to 1781, and the war itself became a form of political education for many Americans. With victory over Britain assured by 1781, Americans had to find ways to solidify their achievement. They had begun that process in 1776, when the Continental Congress recommended that each state create its own constitution. Over the course of the 1780s, Americans wrestled with the problems faced by their newly independent nation. In the process, they came to believe that they needed a more powerful central government, for which the Founders drafted a plan in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787. When the U.S. Constitution emerged from that convention, Americans entered into the last serious ideological debate of the 18th century. As a result of discussions and disagreements during the ratifying conventions, which reached a wide public through the publication of newspapers and pamphlets that covered the political landscape in depth, the Constitution became law in 1789, but it was not yet complete. Only in 1791, with the ratification of the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights, did the ideological debate that began in 1761 finally come to a close. Though the Revolution did not serve every American’s interests, it constituted, as John Adams recognized, a change in the “hearts and minds” of the American people.

Outline

I. The Declaration of Independence laid out ideals that became permanent.
   A. “All men are created equal.”
      1. This statement of universal equality had far-reaching rhetorical significance.
      2. “Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness” became a shorthand way to understand the purpose of the Revolution.
      3. The right of self-government became a hallmark of American life.
      4. The crimes of a tyrant set the colonists on the road to independence.
   B. The Declaration had enormous cultural significance in America.
      1. It is almost universally reprinted in textbooks.
      2. The Declaration shaped politics long after 1776.

II. The Revolution also shaped American culture in specific ways.
   A. The ideals of the Revolution made the United States a desirable target for potential immigrants.
      1. The move away from subjectship to citizenship became a defining feature of the modern, post-monarchical world.
      2. The U.S. Constitution and Jefferson’s Statute for Religious Freedom spoke to a deeply held desire for freedom of thought and expression.
   B. Politicians of varying affiliations have grounded their views in Revolutionary principles.
      1. Soldiers on each side in the American Civil War believed they were fighting to uphold the principles of the American Revolution.
      2. Throughout the post-Revolution period, even to the present, politicians have sought direct connections to the age of the Founders.

III. The Revolution unfolded in three distinct phases.
   A. During the first period, which began in 1761 and lasted until 1775, a nascent resistance movement provided the ideological infrastructure for a revolution.
   B. During the war, from 1775 to 1781, the core ideas of the American Revolution spread even farther among the American people.
   C. From 1781 until the election of Thomas Jefferson almost two decades later, the victors organized a new nation.
1. They coped with unexpected problems in the 1780s.
2. In Philadelphia in 1787, they drafted a plan for a government that has survived for more than 200 years.
3. They came to recognize the importance of articulating certain core principles in the Bill of Rights.
4. During the 1790s, the national government took shape, survived internecine struggles, and emerged intact.
5. The Supreme Court began to carve out its niche as the ultimate interpreter of the U.S. Constitution.

IV. The Revolution can be understood through an exploration of the experiences of particularly articulate individuals.

A. The last loyalist governor of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, moved to England and tried to make sense of the resistance movement.
B. The inventor and statesman Benjamin Franklin saw the resistance movement unfold in London and Philadelphia and played a key role in negotiations between the United States and Paris.
C. Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, became president in 1800. His election signaled that it was possible to transfer power between opposing parties.
D. The immigrant author and farmer Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur described the new nation immediately after the Revolution. In his essay “What is an American?” he provided a definition of a new kind of citizen.
E. The historian Mercy Otis Warren offered one of the most poignant and personal interpretations of the American Revolution.
   1. She came from a distinguished Revolutionary family.
   2. Her History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the Revolution emphasized the moral aspects of the age, with a particular focus on the key individuals involved in the Revolution.

Essential Reading:
Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer.

Supplementary Reading:
J. Franklin Jameson, The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why has the Revolution had such an enduring effect on American public life?
2. Were the Founders’ achievements the acts of a brilliant series of thinkers or the product of circumstance?
Lecture Two
Ideas and Ideologies

Scope: Ideas circulate in every human society. Individuals and, sometimes, entire groups embrace certain ideas at certain times and reject others. More commonly, some members of a society will accept the logic of a specific idea while others reject it. This was the case during the American Revolution: Despite the fact that the ideas of the Revolutionaries now seem self-evident, many thoughtful Americans, as well as most Britons, rejected them. To understand the American Revolution, it is necessary to understand the different ways that ideas circulated in that society at the time. When Europeans first arrived in the Western Hemisphere, the printing press was a relatively new invention; by the late 18th century, the resistance movement drew strength from the fact that ideas circulated speedily through newspapers, broadsides, and especially, pamphlets. Many colonists devoured works of history and political theory, searching them for clues to understand the world around them and, as the 1760s wore on, the political crisis they were witnessing.

Outline

I. Ideas and ideologies are related to each other but not identical.
   A. Ideas had spread in the early modern world in different ways.
      1. Oral modes of communication remained crucial in most societies, including among Europeans.
      2. During the Middle Ages, Europeans paid greater attention to the written word and developed systems for spreading handwritten manuscripts.
      3. The printing press enabled individuals to communicate their ideas more widely.
   B. As a result of the changing value of the written word, Europeans and their American colonists increasingly relied on printing presses.
      1. Printing presses spread throughout parts of the Western Hemisphere.
      2. In the Anglo-American colonies, newspapers began regular production in the early 18th century, though 17th-century colonists already had access to materials (such as captivity narratives and sermons) printed in North America.

II. Ideologies are more than the expression of certain ideas.
   A. Ideologies can be understood systematically.
      1. The most useful way to understand ideologies is to embrace the definition put forward by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz.
      2. In Geertz’s system, ideologies are part of a larger cultural system and enable individuals to make sense of their world.
      3. The ways that individuals thought about Native American drinking practices can serve as an example for how ideologies functioned in early America.
   B. During the age of the American Revolution, ideas spread in certain culturally acceptable ways.
      1. The historian Bernard Bailyn has described the ways that ideas spread in late-18th-century North America.
      2. His theories put particular emphasis on the importance of pamphlets.
      3. Bailyn argued that colonists understood politics as a perpetual contest between the forces of power and liberty.
      4. They frequently looked toward history to understand current events.

III. Ideas moved at different rates of speed in the Anglo-American world.
   A. News about specific incidents traveled rapidly on the local level, often through informal channels.
      1. Paul Revere’s ride through the countryside to warn the Minutemen of Lexington and Concord that the British were coming represented one way of disseminating information as quickly as possible.
      2. This allowed for the speedy transmission of important ideas that needed to circulate before any newspaper could print them.
B. Important news could be found in newspapers, but even in large cities, these tended to appear no more than twice a week.

C. Crucial political ideas appeared in pamphlets, which could be produced and distributed quickly.

D. Ideas moved more slowly back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean.
   1. Under the best circumstances, it could take one month for information to travel from the mainland colonies to England.
   2. Information traveled at different speeds, often depending on which ship carried certain pieces of news.

IV. Many ideas we commonly associate with the Revolution were opposed by Americans at the time.

A. The most obvious opponents were loyalists, who chose to retain their allegiance to the king and Britain.

B. Even after the end of the war, many Americans held diametrically different ideas about how the new state should function.
   1. The debate on the Constitution revealed the deep differences that remained among Americans.
   2. Once again, those involved in the debate used pamphlets to spread their views.

Essential Reading:
Clifford Geertz, “Ideology as a Cultural System,” in Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures.

Supplementary Reading:
Walter Ong, Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word.

Questions to Consider:
1. How can one understand the various influences that shape an ideology?
2. How did the ways that ideas spread in the early modern age affect common understandings of politics and political ideas?
Lecture Three
Europeans of Colonial America

Scope: The English had maintained settlements in eastern North America since the founding of Jamestown in 1607. Over the course of more than 150 years, the Anglo-American population managed to become the most powerful population in the region between the Atlantic Ocean and the Appalachian Mountains. But they were not the only Europeans who lived in the British colonies by the middle of the 18th century. By the time the Revolution began, approximately 10 percent of the colonial population had cultural roots in the German-speaking states of central Europe, and another 10 percent were Scots-Irish. Although most of these colonists were Protestants, their cultures diverged sharply from the dominant culture of the descendants of the earlier English colonists. The Germans and Scots-Irish had shallower roots in North America, though by the mid-18th century, many were the children or grandchildren of individuals who had crossed the Atlantic. Together, these Europeans and descendants of migrants governed a territory in which English was the dominant language, English law prevailed in each colony, and the structure of government reflected English ideals. There was little political dissent within the colonies. The inhabitants of the mainland colonies governed themselves but sustained their ties to Britain without question.

Outline

I. The English established colonies in North America in the 17th century.
   A. The Elizabethans had specific ideas in mind for their colonies in North America.
      1. The promoter Richard Hakluyt (c. 1552–1616) outlined a plan for American colonies.
         a. He based his views, in part, on earlier English efforts to expand the realm.
         b. The English had expanded into Wales, Scotland, and Ireland long before they landed in Chesapeake Bay.
      2. English colonists sought both religious freedom and profit in North America.
   B. The English founded the colony of Virginia in 1607.
      1. Colonists struggled to survive in early Jamestown.
      2. Most of the early residents were indentured servants.
         a. Men outnumbered women by a ratio of six to one during the early colonial period.
         b. Many of the migrants were individuals who had been searching for jobs in Britain before they made the decision to cross the Atlantic Ocean.
      3. In the mid-1610s, the tobacco industry developed.
      4. Colonists governed themselves in the Chesapeake region.
   C. Pilgrims and Puritans began the settlement of New England in 1620.
      1. The Pilgrims signed the Mayflower Compact.
      2. The Puritan leader John Winthrop laid out his idea for a “city on a hill.”
   D. William Penn established Pennsylvania in 1681.
      1. Penn offered a vision for a different kind of colony.
      2. By the 18th century, Pennsylvania was known as the “best poor man’s country.”

II. During the 18th century, many Scots-Irish Protestants decided to migrate to North America.
   A. Scots-Irish farmers and their families left home because they had limited economic prospects.
   B. Many in Northern Ireland found it difficult to escape unfavorable long-term leases.
   C. Emigrants traveled to America because they had heard that the prospects for owning land were greater there.

III. German-speaking Protestants joined the migration to English America in the 18th century.
   A. Religious wars at home prompted these Protestants to seek places of refuge.
   B. The English expressed an interest in helping displaced Protestants.
   C. The vast majority of these 18th-century migrants were attracted to the Middle Colonies.
      1. Colonists sent recruiters to Europe to find possible settlers.
2. William Penn’s agents spread news of his colony in German-speaking areas.

IV. Land speculators played a crucial role in the recruitment of settlers in the 18th century.
   A. They recognized that their holdings were worth little if they could not attract laborers to clear and, thus, “improve” the land.
   B. To encourage migrants to their holdings, land speculators offered favorable purchasing and leasing terms.
   C. The idea that Pennsylvania or any of the colonies was the “best poor man’s country” was both a form of propaganda and an often accurate assessment of the situation.
   D. Land ownership was more widespread in the colonies than in England (or elsewhere in Europe), but land speculators nonetheless worked tirelessly to gain possession of as much land as possible.

V. In the late 18th century, the Anglo-American colonies were primarily rural and resembled much of Britain.
   A. The population in 1775 was approximately 2.5 million.
   B. A relatively small percentage of the population lived in cities.

Essential Reading:
Bernard Bailyn, Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution.

Supplementary Reading:
Thomas J. Archdeacon, Becoming American: An Ethnic History.
James Lemon, The Best Poor Man’s Country.

Questions to Consider:
1. In what ways did the peopling of the British North American colonies fit the ideas expressed in the Elizabethan era?
2. How did the migration of new groups alter the political structure of the Anglo-American colonies in the 18th century?
Lecture Four
Natives and Slaves of Colonial America

Scope: Europeans had gained control of eastern North America, but they were not the region’s only residents. By the middle of the 18th century, approximately 20 percent of the population traced its ancestry to Africa, and the vast majority of these residents were enslaved. Though scholars continue to investigate the precise origins of slavery, there is no debate that the importation of bound laborers from Africa altered the demographic profile of every colony south of Pennsylvania. By 1720, one-half of the population of Virginia and two-thirds of the population of South Carolina were of African descent. Native Americans, too, continued to live either within the boundaries of colonies or on their borders. Many of them looked upon their colonial neighbors with unease and suspicion, the legacy of brutal warfare in the 17th century that had driven natives and newcomers against each other in fierce battles. Like the slaves kept by colonial planters, many of the indigenous people in regular contact with free colonists had little affection for colonists or the British. Native Americans recognized that many of the problems they faced, from the loss of land to the spread of alcohol abuse, were the result of the European colonization of eastern North America.

Outline

I. The English established slavery in the mainland colonies in the second half of the 17th century.
   A. The English could not attract enough servants to tend tobacco crops.
      1. An outbreak of plague and a major fire in London in the 1660s led to improved conditions for potential servants.
      2. The tobacco economy demanded new supplies of laborers.
   B. The English decided to rely on slaves to provide labor for their plantations.
      1. The English established slavery in their legal system.
      2. By 1700, the English defined slavery as permanent, inheritable, and fit for Africans and African-Americans.

II. By the time of the American Revolution, there was no single slave “system” in the mainland colonies.
   A. Slavery existed in the colonies north of Maryland, but it was not widespread.
      1. Slaves could be found in the most productive parts of the region, notably in port cities and on prosperous farms.
      2. Slaves were relatively infrequent across much of New England.
      3. Most northern slaves were born in the mainland colonies.
   B. In the Chesapeake colonies of Maryland and Virginia, slavery was well established, especially on larger plantations.
      1. The slave population itself was split between American-born and African-born individuals, which gave the area a distinctive culture.
      2. Despite the creation of this culture, many slaves fought against the system that treated them as property.
   C. In the lower South colonies of the Carolinas and Georgia, slavery was deeply established.
      1. No other area had such reliance on slave labor.
      2. A clear majority of South Carolina’s population consisted of slaves.
      3. Many native-born slaves lived in cities, notably Charleston, but there were large numbers of African-born slaves on rice plantations.

III. The English colonization of eastern North America undermined Native American communities.
   A. The English brought Old World diseases, which devastated native populations.
      1. Native Americans lacked immunities to such diseases as smallpox.
      2. Diseases spread through the Americas, often in advance of Europeans.
   B. The English created plans for gaining Native Americans’ lands.
      1. Contrary to widespread belief, the English planned to purchase lands from Native Americans.

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2. The English believed that natives did not use land as God intended and, therefore, justified their plans to take possession of it.
3. The natives had different ideas about how to take advantage of the natural resources in their homelands.

C. The fur and deerskin trades altered native economies.
   1. In the northern colonies, colonists and natives participated in the fur trade, and in the South, the deerskin trade took off.
   2. Participation in the fur trade allowed natives to gain access to European goods.
   3. Alcohol became a widely used trade good and destabilized Native American communities.

IV. Despite the changes in indigenous communities, the West remained Indian Country.
   A. In the middle of the 18th century, there were few English communities west of the crest of the Appalachian Mountains.
   B. British and Anglo-American officials recognized that despite the decline in native populations, the interior remained under the control of Indians.
   C. Some colonists, captured by natives, preferred to remain in Indian Country rather than return to Anglo-American settlements.

Essential Reading:
Ira Berlin, Many Thousands Gone.
Daniel Richter, Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America.

Supplementary Reading:
Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia.
James Merrell, The Indians’ New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal.
Peter C. Mancall, Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America.

Questions to Consider:
1. What does the development of slavery in the mainland colonies reveal about Anglo-American attitudes toward property?
2. How did immersion into a transatlantic commercial world influence the lives of the peoples of 18th-century British North America?
Lecture Five
The Colonies in the Atlantic World, c. 1750

Scope: By the middle of the 18th century, the Anglo-American colonies were part of a transatlantic system of exchange. Ships regularly transported Europeans and Africans to American shores, carrying goods, as well. Often organized by merchants in New England, shipping expeditions hauled grains produced in the middle colonies to the West Indies, lumber from New Hampshire forests to English shipyards, deerskins from southern forests to Cuba, furs from northern forests to England and from there to European customers, sugar from the Caribbean to Europe and the American mainland colonies, rice from Carolina to England and from there to Spain and Portugal, and tobacco from the shores of the Chesapeake to ports everywhere. No single agency controlled the movement of goods, nor did the English government exert much control over long-distance commerce. Colonists controlled their own economies, just as their predecessors had since the 17th century. As long as they remained loyal to Britain, the colonists were allowed to live as they chose. They responded by creating one of the most successful economies in history, an economy so robust that it had the ability to absorb tens of thousands of new workers without any notable increase in poverty. By most measures, the colonial enterprise imagined in the Elizabethan era was a resounding success.

Outline

I. Europeans developed a transatlantic mercantile system capable of moving goods long distances.
   A. Europeans since the 16th century had been importing goods from the Americas, and that trade had expanded by the 18th century.
      1. Europeans imported sugar, tobacco, grains, fish, rice, lumber, and other goods from the Western Hemisphere.
      2. The English participated in the triangle trade, which moved goods and people between the mainland colonies, Europe, and the West Indies.
   B. We can learn about how the system worked by examining the production, transportation, and sale of sugar.
      1. Sugar was the ingredient in rum, which became the most popular alcoholic beverage in the Anglo-American colonies.
      2. Rum also became a crucial part of the commerce between colonists and natives, despite the fact that alcohol had devastating consequences for Indians.

II. The English state imposed statutes to regulate the activities of colonists.
    A. The Navigation Acts of the 17th century and the Molasses Act of 1733 established procedures for English shipping based on the idea of mercantilism that remained at the core of the English colonial experience.
       1. The English established fees and duties on the movement of goods from the colonies to English ports.
       2. Residents of the mainland colonies continued to control the domestic economy.
    B. Despite such statutes, colonists created a profitable economy, evident in the number of large colonies on the mainland.

III. The Anglo-American economy boomed in the 18th century.
    A. Population growth fueled domestic economic expansion in the mainland colonies.
    B. The English seemingly fulfilled the economic plans that the Elizabethans had laid out in the 16th century.

IV. Free Anglo-American colonists inhabited a primarily rural society.
    A. There were few cities, and those that existed were still relatively small, especially compared to London.
    B. Widespread land-holding allowed a larger proportion of the free male population to participate in the political system.

V. Benjamin Franklin’s writings from the middle of the century provide insights into crucial demographic and political phenomena.
    A. He speculated about the growth of population in the colonies.
    B. He feared that immigration from across Europe would undermine English culture in North America.
C. He protested a British plan to send convicts to the colonies as indentured servants.
   1. In the pages of his newspaper, Franklin detailed crimes committed by transported felons.
   2. He suggested that Americans send rattlesnakes to London in exchange.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Jon Butler, Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776.

Questions to Consider:
1. How did American colonists benefit from the movement of goods in the Atlantic world?
2. What did Benjamin Franklin realize about population growth in the English mainland colonies?
Lecture Six
The Seven Years’ War

Scope: The British and French had been battling each other for generations, in North America and elsewhere. They had fought three distinct wars against each other in the century before the start of the Seven Years’ War. But though those conflicts had sown long-lasting animosity, they had little effect on either nation’s holdings in the Western Hemisphere. In 1754, before hostilities began, the English claimed land in a narrow band between the Atlantic and the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. By 1763, when negotiators for each side signed a treaty in Paris signaling a formal end to the war, the British laid claim to almost one-half of the North American continent. The British also laid claim to territory elsewhere, a sign of the global reach of this conflict. Both the scale of the war itself and the vast expanse of lands that traded hands were unprecedented. As a result of the conflict, which is often known in the United States as the French and Indian War, the British stationed more troops in the Western Hemisphere than ever before. But Anglo-American colonists also gained military experience, among them a young George Washington, whose actions in the colonial hinterland helped to set off the conflict. By the time the active conflict ebbed in the mainland colonies in 1761, the years of war had taken a toll across the hinterland, where most of the fighting actually took place. But colonists in cities participated, too, especially merchants, who learned of the profits to be had in wartime.

Outline

I. The Seven Years’ War changed the nature of life in North America.
   A. Although the war was another in a string of conflicts between the French and the English, the consequences this time were permanent.
      1. The Seven Years’ War began when Virginians came into conflict with French soldiers trying to establish forts in the Ohio Valley.
      2. Among the early participants was George Washington, who in 1754, tried to remove a French fort at the site of modern-day Pittsburgh.
   B. The war quickly escalated.
      1. During discussions of how to defend themselves, representatives from seven colonies met at Albany to assess Benjamin Franklin’s plan for a union of mainland English colonies.
      2. Large numbers of British forces arrived in 1755.
      3. Fighting soon spread into a global conflict, with battles in India, the Philippines, and Africa.

II. Despite early setbacks, the British prevailed in the conflict, and the map and politics of North America were never the same.
   A. As a result of victory, Britain gained clear title from France to all of North America east of the Mississippi River (with the exception of New Orleans).
   B. Spain, an ally of France during the war, traded Florida for Cuba, which the British had taken in 1762.
   C. Spain also gained New Orleans and France’s claim to the trans-Mississippi West.

III. The war altered relations between Britain and the Anglo-American colonists.
   A. The war had cost the British dearly, and they now needed to find a way to pay off their war debt.
      1. The British believed it would be impossible to raise domestic taxes.
      2. The tax base was already too high as a result of earlier military campaigns.
      3. The British public often demonstrated its displeasure when charged for goods at excessive prices, and the government feared similar discontent if it tried to raise taxes.
   B. Americans supported the British war effort but chafed under British military leaders, who frequently treated the locals with contempt.
      1. During the war, the British tried to crack down on colonial evasions of the Navigation Acts.
      2. The government issued general search warrants, known as writs of assistance, to enable local officials to search for contraband.
IV. When the war ended in 1761, the colonists had to cope with new economic and political circumstances.
   A. Though some colonial merchants had made profits during the war, no one could have anticipated what would happen to the economy after 1763.
   B. The British decision to raise funds shifted the nature of the relationship between the state and individuals.

V. In this time of crisis, there was no single institution capable of providing a coherent vision for the colonies.
   A. In traditional societies, including those of Europe, a central state had the capacity to organize affairs of the economy and society.
   B. In those societies, religious institutions often played a crucial role.
   C. In the Anglo-American colonies, the lack of a single cohesive religious entity meant that one source of stability was lacking.

Essential Reading:
Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. In what ways did the Seven Years’ War alter daily life in the Americas?
2. How did British victory shape relations between the British government and the colonies?
3. Some scholars have argued that the Seven Years’ War marked the true beginnings of the British Empire and others have suggested that it was the war that “made America.” Which of these arguments is the most compelling and why?
Lecture Seven
The British Constitution

Scope: When the active period of warfare ended on the North American continent in 1761, the vast majority of Anglo-American colonists celebrated their ties to Britain. In particular, they cherished the idea of the British Constitution. Unlike the later U.S. Constitution, the British Constitution was not written in a single document but, instead, incorporated the sum total of the acts of the king and Parliament and the powers animating them. The Constitution had been in constant development since the Magna Carta, but for the Anglo-American colonists and for many people in Britain, the most important developments related to the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688. In the 18th century, English observers believed that the British Constitution was a perfect form of government because it gave political voice to the three natural orders of the society, each of which endowed the system with its particular attribute: the monarchy, which conferred order; the aristocracy, which conferred wisdom; and the people, who conferred virtue. Each order had its own branch of government, though the House of Commons, which in theory represented the people, was the most important for domestic affairs. Longstanding systems of patronage allowed the monarch to exert some authority, but because of the events of 1688, the king’s authority mostly related to control over the colonies. As a result, the management of foreign affairs under this “unwritten” constitution remained well within the prerogative of the king or queen. The system worked brilliantly and was accepted at home and abroad by the vast majority of the Anglophone world. For those who were interested, many of the core ideas of the system could be found in the theoretical writings of John Locke, especially his Second Treatise of Government, and in the works of British opposition writers, such as John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon.

Outline

I. The Magna Carta became part of British law in the early 13th century.
   A. There had been tensions for generations between the English monarch and the landed aristocracy.
      1. King John, who reigned from 1199 to 1216, tried to solve the problem by ensuring certain rights for the nobility.
      2. The Magna Carta became law in June 1215.
   B. The provisions of the Magna Carta were very specific and addressed particular concerns of the nobles.
      1. It laid out rules for such matters as the inheritance of estates and the rights of widows and minors inheriting estates.
      2. It provided for towns, as well as individuals.
      3. The document provided specific protections for the nobles, including barring the seizure of their horses or the use of their wood without permission.
      4. The Magna Carta also laid out general legal protections and established that an individual could not be jailed or exiled without a ruling by his peers.
   C. The Magna Carta mattered because it demonstrated limits to the power of the monarch, which became one of the fundamental principles of British law.

II. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 redefined the workings of the British Constitution.
   A. In exchange for the restoration of the monarchy, Parliament limited the authority of the king or queen.
      1. The monarch could no longer dismiss a judge or create new courts without Parliamentary consent.
      2. The monarch was not able to maintain a standing army in peacetime.
      3. The monarch could not raise taxes.
      4. After 1707, the monarch never again vetoed an act of Parliament.
   B. The monarch, acting through his or her ministers, maintained some authority over the operation of politics.
      1. The monarch’s ministers could dole out patronage positions.
      2. The ministers could exert some control over Parliament through so-called “rotten boroughs.”
   C. The prevailing understanding of the British Constitution can be found in the French political theorist Baron de Montesquieu’s Spirit of the Laws.
1. In his *Spirit of the Laws*, Montesquieu (1689–1755) described the workings of the British Constitution, emphasizing the balance of the natural orders of the society.

2. The system worked because the monarch, the aristocracy, and the people each had, in theory, their own branch of government.

3. The three natural orders worked together in a “mixed government” designed to minimize the possibility of any group dominating the system.

III. In the United States, John Locke’s theories about the proper role of government and the limits of its powers are normally associated with the British Constitution.

A. Locke (1632–1704) was interested in the ways that the human mind developed. His *Essay on Human Understanding* of 1690 laid out an empirical argument for the nature of human knowledge.

B. Locke’s writings on government emerged in his *Two Treatises on Government*.
   1. In his *First Treatise*, he attacked the idea of divine monarchy.
   2. In his *Second Treatise*, Locke laid out what he believed were the core principles of government.
   3. He argued that individuals needed government, even if it meant they had to give up some element of personal liberty to attain it.
   4. He saw the relation between the people and the government as a contract, and if those in government abused their authority, then the people had an obligation to overturn it.

IV. Anglo-American colonists in the 18th century read history and political theory avidly, often looking for the moments when political systems faltered.

A. They took special interest in the history of Rome.

B. More often, their reading reflected a deep understanding of English opposition writers, such as John Trenchard (1662–1723) and Thomas Gordon (c. 1690s–1750), who in the early 18th century, published a series of political critiques of the British government known as *Cato’s Letters*.

C. Despite the obvious links of Locke to core ideas of the Revolution, those who led the resistance movement tended to look to other authorities, such as *Cato’s Letters*, to provide an explanation for the political world they inhabited.

Essential Reading:
John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did American colonists take such an interest in British opposition writers?
2. Did the British Constitution fit the American experience of government?
Scope: In 1760, the 22-year-old George III acceded to the throne after the death of his grandfather. George II had reigned in part by working with his closest ministers to minimize potential threats to the political system. During his reign (1727–1760), colonists had established ties to George II’s inner circle and, thereby, played an unofficial (and indirect) role in shaping policies relating to overseas possessions. George III, who would later suffer bouts of madness and eventual blindness as the result of a debilitating genetic disease, was at the time of his accession, a vigorous young man who immediately disbanded his predecessor’s coterie. Colonists initially had no reason to fear the change. But that was before the young king and his new advisors decided to take a direct hand in the regulation of the economy of the colonies. During the first five years of his reign, the new king and his minions altered prevailing political practice in the administration of the colonies. They did not do so for arbitrary reasons. Instead, they recognized the extraordinary cost of the Seven Years’ War, and they searched for ways to pay their debts. The tax burden in England was already so high that any effort to raise the funds domestically might very well set off riots, as other actions had periodically during the 18th century. Given that the Anglo-American colonists were the beneficiaries of the British victory over France, at least in the opinion of the king, it seemed reasonable to have them share in the costs of administering at least that portion of an empire that now stretched around the world.

Outline

I. Only 22 years old when he became king, George III immediately put his stamp on the British political world.
   A. He understood that the king should play an important symbolic role in British society.
   B. Though Americans tend to despise him, George III became a popular figure in Britain, especially after the French Revolution.
   C. He felt no deep loyalty to the Whig politicians who had played crucial roles in the reigns of the first two Georges, nor did he act according to Parliament’s wishes.
      1. He aimed to make Britain take the role of the king more seriously.
      2. George III installed Lord Bute as his prime minister even though Bute lacked the support of Parliament (he lasted only until 1763).
   D. In England, many feared that the king was in league with the Tories, who had long lacked effective political power.
      1. One result of the king’s direct role in politics was instability in the ministry, especially during the 1760s.
      2. Only with the appointment of Lord North as prime minister in 1770 did George III have a capable administration.

II. George faced a series of challenges that would have tested any monarch.
   A. Within Britain and its possessions, political dissent was growing.
      1. Unrest appeared in Ireland and England, including riots in London.
      2. By decade’s end, even the prime minister (Lord North) was attacked on the streets.
   B. The king had to deal with the rising popularity of John Wilkes and his newspaper, the North Briton.

III. The Seven Years’ War had drained the finances of the nation.
   A. Taxes were already too high in Britain to be raised further, leaving the king and his ministers with a pressing problem: Where could they go to get the funds needed to pay off their debt?
   B. No single office was responsible for British affairs in North America.

IV. Despite the shifts at the highest level of government, the imperial system, whose purpose was to raise revenue, remained intact.
   A. The British idea of empire differed from that of the Spanish.
      1. The Spanish created a territorial empire in which colonies were to follow orders from Europe.
2. The British allowed colonists to govern their own affairs as long as they adhered to regulations regarding the movement of goods.

B. The British system was inefficient from a bureaucratic standpoint, but a crisis was not imminent.

C. During the early parts of George III’s reign, many Britons and Anglo-Americans believed that their best days were still to come.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
J. H. Plumb, *The First Four Georges*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Was George III an incipient tyrant when he acceded to the throne in 1760?
2. What could George III have done differently to solve the problems faced by Britain and its empire in the 1760s?
Lecture Nine
Politics in British America before 1760

Scope: Ever since the founding of Virginia in 1607, Anglo-American colonists had been governing themselves. Although nominally under the control of the king and Parliament, colonists routinely controlled all daily matters, such as regulating boundary lines, keeping roads free of obstacles, and enforcing regulations from provincial assemblies, bodies composed of free white males elected locally. Even within the colonies, politics was not a top-down affair; colonial representatives received petitions from their constituents and responded to them. This system allowed for far more direct participation in politics than existed in England or anywhere else in Europe at the time. As a result, colonists came to expect that legislative bodies would be responsive to them. Although governors typically were royal appointments, most did not employ their veto powers frequently. Given that neither the king nor Parliament demanded any action other than the paying of fees on goods shipped abroad, governors normally resisted using the powers at their command. In addition to the governors and assemblies, most colonies also housed imperial officials whose task was to enforce rules regulating the shipment of goods. However, many colonists resisted paying such duties and preferred instead to bribe customs officials, thereby insuring the constant importation of valuable goods (such as sugar from the West Indies) without paying the appropriate fees.

Outline

I. Colonists had controlled local affairs since the early 17th century.
   A. The formation of the Virginia House of Burgesses was a crucial step in the idea of self-government in the mainland colonies.
   B. Self-government developed in New England, as well.
      1. The Mayflower Compact of 1620 represented the beginning of the concept of self-government in the region.
      2. Towns in Massachusetts governed themselves, developing the system of the town meeting to address public issues.
   C. The proprietary colonies founded in the latter decades of the 17th century also allowed for substantial self-rule.
      1. The Fundamentall Constitutiones of Carolina, written by John Locke in 1669, provided details about such matters as the central role of the church in the colony.
      2. William Penn’s Charter of Liberties of 1682 put forward a detailed plan for the governance of his territory.
      3. Pennsylvania’s revised plan of government, written in 1696, made improvements to the initial system.

II. At the time George III acceded to the throne, the transatlantic political system functioned well.
   A. Colonists accepted the system because they believed it served their interests.
   B. They had contacts and agents in London who voiced their concerns to governmental officials.
   C. The British imposed few regulations on the colonists.
   D. British officials were concerned primarily with the movement of goods, not the day-to-day affairs of the realm’s far-flung subjects.

III. Colonists retained control over aspects of their lives that were important to them.
   A. They continued to establish local laws, which they intended to maintain order in their communities.
   B. Freeholders elected local assemblies.

IV. Each colony had a governor chosen in England.
   A. Most colonies had governors who were royal appointments.
   B. Proprietary colonies had governors who were chosen by the proprietors.
   C. In all cases, colonial governors had greater executive authority than the king or his agents in British domestic politics.
D. These officials appointed from abroad often saw this service as a way to make a profit for themselves.

V. Elected representatives in colonial assemblies responded to their constituents directly, primarily by being responsive to their petitions.
   A. Through this system, colonists came to embrace the idea of actual representation.
   B. The evidence for this system can be found in petitions that have survived from the 18th century.

VI. Colonists learned how to shape or evade imperial policies that had an effect on their lives.
   A. Colonial merchants were particularly adept at getting around laws that might have diminished their profits.
   B. They frequently bribed imperial officials to look the other way.
   C. The system functioned despite colonists’ efforts to evade paying taxes.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. In what ways did colonists’ understanding of local politics prepare them for the challenges of the post-1763 period?
2. How did the two political systems—the transatlantic and the local—work together?
Lecture Ten
James Otis and the Writs of Assistance Case

Scope: The accession of George III in 1760 meant that certain legislation had to be renewed. Among the statutes was a provision demanding that local officials allow customs representatives to board vessels they suspected held contraband. Rather than accept this routine request, merchants in Boston who were involved in the distilling business hired a lawyer named James Otis to represent them in court. Otis, who had been a rising star in the provincial legal system, took the case, nursing a private grievance against the court (which had passed over his father for a recent vacancy). In court, he argued that Parliament (and the king) had no right to enforce writs of assistance because they represented a violation of the notion that an individual had a right to his property, a right that had been long protected by the British Constitution. Though the court found Otis’s argument irrelevant, the case had a far-reaching effect. For the first time, colonists had challenged the notion that they should be subject to British rule. They did not reject the idea that they were British. Instead, Otis argued that the Parliament had violated the Constitution by passing a law that violated fundamental law. In this instance, the Constitution’s self-correcting procedures did not work and so the writs were, in Otis’s terminology, “unconstitutional.” No one took to the streets to pursue the claim, but one of the central premises of the Revolution had been established: Colonists felt empowered to resist Parliamentary acts they did not like.

Outline

I. James Otis (1725–1783) was a successful lawyer when he accepted the case that changed the course of his life.
   A. After training for the law, Otis had risen quickly in the provincial legal establishment.
   B. In 1761, he was set to become solicitor general for the British vice-admiralty court.
   C. He was upset that his father, a man known as Col. James Otis, had been passed over for a seat on the Massachusetts supreme court.

II. The newly enacted writs of assistance threatened Boston’s merchants, particularly those engaged in long-distance trade.
   A. The writs demanded that local officials search vessels suspected of carrying contraband.
   B. Merchants had avoided paying duties earlier by bribing customs officials but now feared that they would have to pay higher fees.

III. The Writs of Assistance case went to court in Boston in 1761.
   A. Otis argued that the writ was unconstitutional because it violated the right to property protected by the British Constitution.
   B. John Adams watched his performance and left a report revealing the significance of Otis’s arguments.
   C. The court ruled against Otis.
   D. Despite the loss of the case, Otis had established one of the central ideas of the Revolution.
      1. Colonists thereafter felt empowered to resist Parliamentary acts.
      2. Otis emerged as an early and important leader of the resistance movement and wrote pamphlets articulating arguments against British policies.
   E. Otis’s 1762 pamphlet, Vindication of the Conduct of the House of Representatives, quickly became a core document in the nascent political movement that the Writs case had helped launch.
   F. In 1764, Otis published The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved, another pamphlet that reached a wide audience.
   G. As a result of his protests against the Crown and its agents, Otis became the target of political opponents, who sometimes used newspapers to vent their rage at him.

IV. Despite his initial fame, Otis became a tragic figure in later life.
   A. He descended into mental illness during the 1760s.
      1. His friends took pity on his infirmities.
2. His enemies, by contrast, seized on his diminished faculties and ridiculed him.
3. He spent his last years far from the bustling crowds of Boston.
4. He was killed by a bolt of lightning in May 1783.
B. John Adams believed that it was Otis’s argument in the Writs case that helped initiate the resistance movement.

Essential Reading:
Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*, chapter 2.

Supplementary Reading:
M. H. Smith, *The Writs of Assistance Case*.
William Tudor, *The Life of James Otis of Massachusetts*.

Questions to Consider:
1. How could colonial merchants justify their opposition to the writs of assistance?
2. Does it change our understanding of the American Revolution if we view its origins in the action brought by smugglers against a legitimate act of law?
Lecture Eleven
The Search for Order and Revenue

Scope: Ignoring protests, such as that voiced by James Otis in Boston, Parliament and the king recognized that the end of the Seven Years’ War created new problems for the empire. They feared chaos in the West, especially given that various groups of colonists had already expressed interest in laying claim to the rich lands between the Appalachians and the Mississippi. Some of these colonists were individuals who intended to squat on the lands and gain a legitimate right by virtue of possession. Others were organized into companies that hoped to create entire new colonies. Still others feared that colonial expansion would have a detrimental effect on the fur trade, which was one of the thriving commercial ventures in the backcountry. To solve these problems, British officials first enacted the Proclamation of 1763, establishing a boundary line along the crest of the mountains. Further, they passed two acts of legislation intended to raise funds: a new tax on molasses imported from the West Indies and an act intended to eliminate the use of colonial paper money to pay imperial debts. Each of these actions enraged colonists, who believed that they were being subject to direct rule by London. Despite their anger, colonists remained loyal subjects of the king.

Outline

I. The end of war prompted many colonists to seek land in the West after 1763.
   A. The contest for land pitted land speculators against settlers and fur traders.
   B. The land speculation companies included colonists who would play a decisive role in the Revolution, such as Benjamin Franklin and George Washington.
   C. The dispute over western lands in the colonies caused anxiety in London, where British officials sought ways to prevent chaos.

II. Parliament passed the Proclamation of 1763.
   A. The act aimed to halt all migration of colonists westward beyond the Appalachian Mountains.
   B. Specific provisions in the proclamation represented an effort to organize the mainland colonies after 1763.
      1. The proclamation laid out the boundaries for east and west Florida.
      2. Some existing colonies received additional lands.
      3. Provisions dealt with such issues as fishing rights and the internal organization of new colonies.
   C. The act was unenforceable because the Crown lacked the soldiers to police the interior.
   D. The act suggested that the king and Parliament were shifting their historic position toward governing the colonies, moving from a position that allowed colonists to govern their own affairs to a new stance in which they would try to set policies for colonists.

III. In 1764, Parliament passed the Sugar Act.
   A. The act, also called the Revenue Act, aimed to raise funds through new taxes on molasses, the intermediary product between sugar cane and refined sugar, imported from the West Indies.
      1. Molasses was a valuable import in the mainland colonies, where distillers used it to produce rum.
      2. Merchants, who had earlier protested the writs of assistance in 1761, felt threatened by the legislation.
   B. The act lowered the duty on imported sugar in an effort to convince colonists that it was cheaper to be law-abiding than to bribe customs officials.
   C. The act was the first direct tax imposed on colonists.

IV. Parliament also passed the Currency Act.
   A. This act forbade the payment of taxes with paper money produced in the colonies.
   B. The act threatened the colonial economy, which had long operated with a shortage of hard specie.
   C. Colonists feared that the act represented a direct intrusion into the daily workings of the colonial economy.
V. Despite the fact that the acts had honorable intentions, at least in the minds of the British, many colonists felt otherwise.
   A. Resolutions from legislative bodies in Massachusetts and Virginia revealed that the acts were being met with suspicion and that colonists would prefer that they be cancelled.
   B. Colonists believed that the creation of vice-admiralty courts threatened their rights as freeborn Englishmen.
   C. The language of rights permeated colonial responses to the acts.

Essential Reading:
Eric Hinderaker and Peter C. Mancall, *At the Edge of Empire*, chapter 5.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did colonists react so strongly to the Proclamation of 1763, which was intended to prevent violence and chaos?
2. Why did the lowering of the duty on molasses seem so threatening?
Lecture Twelve
The Stamp Act and Rebellion in the Streets

Scope: In 1765, the British Parliament enacted the Stamp Act, demanding that all printed materials carry a stamp. The revenue raised by the act, like the funds the British hoped to raise with the acts of 1764, was intended to cover the increased costs of administering Anglo-American lands. But as soon as news spread that they would have to pay a special tax on printed materials, colonists took to the streets. They called themselves Sons of Liberty and danced around quickly fashioned “liberty trees.” They threatened the individuals who had received the positions as stamp collectors, at times burning them in effigy. They massed in the streets, threatened disorder, and destroyed the house of Thomas Hutchinson, lieutenant governor of Massachusetts and the man many of the protesters associated most directly with growing imperial power. The protests spread throughout the colonies and unified a previously unorganized resistance movement. In September, representatives from nine colonies met in New York and drafted a petition to the king demanding repeal of the act, as well as the acts of 1764. During the protests, the colonists began to articulate ideas that fast became crucial to the rebellion, specifically, the idea that individuals cannot be taxed without representation in the political body passing such legislation. For the first time, those who articulated their concerns could claim to have found a mass following.

Outline

I. The British Parliament enacted the Stamp Act in 1765.
   A. The act required the purchase of a stamp on any printed material.
      1. Colonists learned that they needed to pay a new tax on common goods.
      2. The Stamp Act levied a direct tax on colonists by Britain, the first time it had done so.
   B. The act was complicated, onerous, and far-reaching.
      1. It included 58 separate provisions, each describing the tax necessary on a specific good.
      2. The detail in the act suggests the thoroughness of those who proposed it.
      3. Virtually all colonists would have been compelled to pay for stamps on the long list of goods identified in the act.
      4. The act also threatened to reveal the authors of anonymous political pamphlets, thereby eroding potential dissent within the colonies.

II. The Stamp Act represented a shift in the ways that the British governed their possessions in North America and the limits of colonists’ acceptance of such measures.
   A. The idea of a direct tax violated the notion that the colonists inhabited self-governing provinces.
   B. Passage of the act convinced colonists that their lives would change for the worse.

III. Colonists decided to protest the Stamp Act.
   A. Public protests involving hundreds of people suggested that colonists took the idea of Parliamentary encroachments on their property more seriously than they had taken the earlier writs of assistance.
   B. Groups calling themselves Sons of Liberty formed in Anglo-American cities and towns.
   C. They organized protests against the Stamp Act.
   D. The Sons of Liberty revealed that they would use violence if necessary to stop the enforcement of the act.

IV. The Sons of Liberty in Boston became the most prominent protest group in the colonies.
   A. Elite members of Boston society threatened to use their connections with mobs to halt the distribution of stamps.
   B. The Boston Sons of Liberty threatened individual stamp collectors.

V. The Sons of Liberty focused their wrath on Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson.
   A. The Sons of Liberty held him personally accountable for their troubles.
   B. They chose to sack his house and destroy his possessions.
C. Hutchinson opposed the Stamp Act but believed it was his duty to enforce legitimate British imperial policies.

VI. Hostility to the Stamp Act spread through the mainland colonies.
   A. Newspapers, including the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, fanned the flames of protest with visual icons, such as a skull-and-crossbones symbol representing the new stamps.
   B. Legislative bodies took formal actions against the act.
   C. Public statements against the Stamp Act often invoked the violation of colonists’ longstanding rights.

VII. Representatives of nine colonies met in New York in the Stamp Act Congress.
   A. Their petition to the king revealed that they believed there was a legal solution to the crisis.
      1. Their petition expressed loyalty to the king.
      2. The members of the Stamp Act Congress demonstrated how many colonists felt aggrieved by this particular act of legislation.
   B. Merchants similarly protested the act and tried to halt existing orders for goods from Britain.

**Essential Reading:**
Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*, chapter 2.

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. How did the willingness to use violence shape the resistance movement in this formative struggle?
2. What did the calling of the New York Congress and its petition to the king reveal about the nature of Anglo-American politics in the 1760s?
Mainland Colonies of British North America
Timeline

October 25, 1760.............................Death of King George II and accession of King George III.
February 1761 .............................The Writs of Assistance case is argued in Boston.
February 10, 1763 ...........................The Peace of Paris is signed, bringing to an end the Seven Years’ War and greatly expanding British territory in North America.
October 7, 1763...............................The English establish the Proclamation Line, which attempts to stop all colonial migration west of the crest of the Appalachian Mountains.
December 13, 1763 .........................The Paxton Boys, a backwoods group of vigilantes, slaughter peaceful Conestoga Indians in Lancaster and march on Philadelphia, where they are turned back two weeks later.
April 5, 1764 ...................................Parliament passes the Sugar Act, which lowers taxes on imported molasses in an effort to discourage smuggling.
April 19, 1764 .................................Parliament authorizes the Currency Act, which limits the use of paper money in the North American colonies.
June 13, 1764 .................................The Massachusetts general court establishes the colonies’ first Committee of Correspondence to organize protest against British government actions.
August 1764 ....................................Boston merchants organize the first non-importation effort in protest of the Sugar Act.
March 22, 1765 ...............................Parliament passes the Stamp Act, scheduled to go into operation on November 1.
Spring 1765.....................................Upon hearing news of the Stamp Act, colonists begin to protest; James Otis, John Adams, and Patrick Henry each make public statements against the act; colonists form groups known as the Sons of Liberty.
August 14, 1765 ..............................Sons of Liberty in Boston hang an effigy of the stamp collector (Andrew Oliver) from a tree; he resigns the next day.
August 26, 1765 ..............................Sons of Liberty trash and burn the house of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson.
March 18, 1766 ...............................Parliament repeals the Stamp Act and passes the Declaratory Bill.
June 29, 1767 ..................................Parliament authorizes the Townshend Acts and creates the American Board of Customs Commissioners, to be housed in Boston, where British customs officials (who arrived in November) would be based.
January 20, 1768 .............................Lord Hillsborough becomes the secretary of state for the North American colonies, the first time the British have tried to organize the administration of American affairs in a single office.
March 1768 .....................................Parliament creates four vice-admiralty courts, to be based in Halifax, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston.
June 10, 1768 .................................British officials seize John Hancock’s *Liberty*. Bostonians soon riot in protest, prompting British troops to be ordered to the city; they arrive on October 1.
August 1, 1769 ..............................Thomas Hutchinson becomes governor of Massachusetts.
December 1769 ..............................The British, with Lord North as prime minister, decide to repeal all the Townshend duties except for the duty on tea.
March 5, 1770 .................................The Boston Massacre leads to five deaths; Paul Revere’s engraving of the act becomes the most effective form of propaganda to date for the resistance to British
acts. In early December, six soldiers are acquitted in a Boston court and two others are convicted of manslaughter.

September 1771.........................In response to a request from Samuel Adams, the Town Meeting in Boston establishes Committees of Correspondence.

June 10, 1772 .........................The British *Gaspee* runs aground off Providence; locals row the crew to shore, then burn the ship.

March 2, 1773 .........................Virgini ans create a committee of correspondence in response to the *Gaspee* incident in Rhode Island.

May 10, 1773 .........................Parliament authorizes the Tea Act in an effort to boost the fortunes of the East India Company; provisions of the act specify that tea contracts would be awarded to consignees, at least some of whom are political favorites.

December 16, 1773 .......................Sons of Liberty in Boston, dressed as Native Americans, dump 90,000 pounds of tea into Boston Harbor, in what becomes known as the “Boston Tea Party.”

January–June 1774......................Parliament passes the Coercive or Intolerable Acts to punish the people of Boston and Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party: The Boston Port Act (March 31) closes the port; the Massachusetts Government Act (May 20) reorganizes the administration of the colony; the Administration of Justice Act (May 20) authorizes trials for colonists to take place outside the province; the Quartering Act (June 2) allows British soldiers to seize unoccupied buildings in Massachusetts; the Quebec Act (June 22) threatens Protestants in New England by enabling the government of Quebec to have control of western lands.

June 17, 1774 .........................Even before news of the final acts has reached Massachusetts, colonists in Boston put out a call for a congress to meet to address the crisis.

September 5, 1774 ......................The First Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia and, in October, establishes the Association to enforce non-importation of British goods.

October 7, 1774 ......................John Hancock becomes the head of the provincial Committee of Safety.

April 18, 1775 ......................Paul Revere and William Dawes ride into the countryside to warn of the British advance on Lexington.

April 19, 1775 ......................Revolutionary War begins with shots fired at Lexington and Concord.

May 10, 1775 .........................The Second Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia; that same day, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold take Fort Ticonderoga.

June 17, 1775 ......................Battle of Bunker Hill.

July 6, 1775 ......................Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms.

January 1776 .........................Tom Paine publishes *Common Sense*; it becomes an immediate sensation.

March 17, 1776 ......................The British evacuate Boston and head toward New York; 10,000 troops take Staten Island on July 2.

May 10, 1776 ......................Congress authorizes states to establish new forms of government.

July 4, 1776 ......................Members of Congress sign the Declaration of Independence.

August 27, 1776 ......................The British defeat the Continental Army at Long Island; under the command of William Howe, the British subsequently take New York and New Jersey and defeat the Continental Army again, on October 28, at White Plains.

September 21, 1776 ......................A fire destroys about one-fourth of the buildings in New York City.

December 26, 1776 ......................Washington crosses the Delaware, capturing 1,000 British soldiers at Trenton.

January 3, 1777 ......................Washington launches a raid on Princeton, driving the British back to New York.
July–October 1777 .......................... Howe leads a British campaign up the Chesapeake toward Philadelphia, which he occupies after defeating the Continental Army at Brandywine (on September 11) and Germantown (on October 4).

October 17, 1777 .......................... Burgoyne surrenders to Gates at Saratoga, signaling the end of the British campaign in the North.

December 1777 ............................. Washington and his troops establish their winter camp at Valley Forge.

February 6, 1778 .......................... France signs the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, supporting the Americans against the British; Spain subsequently enters the war as an ally of France. The British reorganize their military campaign and direct their energies toward the South.

March to June 1780 ........................ At least 188 Massachusetts towns respond to request to ratify the state constitution; the constitution becomes law at the end of October. The ratification process becomes a model for subsequent state constitutions.

February 27, 1781 ........................ The Articles of Confederation become the official form of government once Maryland agrees, the last state to do so.

October 18, 1781 ........................ Cornwallis, unable to escape the siege of Yorktown, surrenders, effectively ending the British military effort in North America, though troops remain until 1783.

April 12, 1782 ............................. Negotiations to end the conflict begin in Paris.

September 3, 1783 ........................ Treaty ends the Revolutionary War.

November 25, 1783 ........................ The last British forces leave New York.

December 23, 1783 ........................ Washington goes to Congress, meeting in Annapolis, and resigns his commission.

January 16, 1786 ........................ Virginia finally adopts Jefferson’s Statute for Religious Freedom.

August 1786 ............................. Shays’ Rebellion breaks out in western Massachusetts.

September 1786 .......................... Delegates from the states who had traveled to Annapolis to revise the Articles of Confederation decide they will meet the following year in Philadelphia to continue the effort.

January 1787 ............................. Shays’ Rebellion continues with an attack on the Springfield federal arsenal.

May 25, 1787 ............................. The meeting, which becomes the Constitutional Convention, opens in Philadelphia; on September 17, it ends, submitting the U.S. Constitution to the states for ratification.

July 13, 1787 ............................. Northwest Ordinance enacted by the Continental Congress.

December 1787 .......................... Delaware (December 7), Pennsylvania (December 12), and New Jersey (December 18) ratify the Constitution.

January–July 1788 ........................ Georgia (January 9), Massachusetts (February 6), Maryland (April 28), South Carolina (May 23), New Hampshire (June 21), Virginia (June 25), and New York (July 26) ratify the Constitution.

April 1789 ............................. The Electoral College chooses George Washington as president and John Adams as vice president.

September 1789 .......................... Congress passes the Judiciary Act, establishing the federal court system.

May 29, 1790 ............................. Rhode Island is the last state to ratify the Constitution.

December 15, 1791 ........................ Three-quarters of the states ratified the first 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights, to the Constitution.

1793 ............................. Supreme Court decides Chisholm v. Georgia.
March 4, 1797 .................................John Adams becomes the second president of the United States and delivers his inaugural address.

1798.................................................Adams’s administration supports the Alien and Sedition Acts, which are opposed by Jefferson and Madison.

March 4, 1801 .................................Thomas Jefferson delivers his inaugural address seeking harmony between Republicans and Federalists.
Glossary

abolition: The movement to eradicate the slavery of African-Americans.

Albany Plan: A proposal made by Benjamin Franklin in 1754 that would unite the 13 colonies but allow them to remain part of the British Empire.

amendment: An addition to a constitution that, once adopted, has the same authority as any other part of that constitution.

antifederalists: Individuals opposed to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Articles of Confederation: The first national government of the United States.

bicameral: A legislative body with two distinct parts or branches.

Bill of Rights, state: The enumeration, in different forms, of certain rights defined at the state level as needing protection from governmental intrusion.

Bill of Rights, U.S.: The first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

broadside: A single sheet of printed paper, often posted in a public place.

checks and balances: The term used to describe the internal series of checks within the federal system of government established by the U.S. Constitution.

colonial agent: An individual living outside of the colony working for the colony’s interest; before and during the era of the Revolution, colonial agents working in London tried to minimize or deter any legislation that might threaten the well-being of the colony.

colonist: An individual inhabiting territory possessed by a nation and (in normal times) pledging obedience to the ruler of that nation.

Committees of Correspondence and Safety: Extralegal groups within the colonies that took it upon themselves to organize the resistance movement and, at times, to take over the actions of governing bodies.

Constitution, British: The sum total of the acts of the king and Parliament and the powers animating them. Sometimes called the “unwritten constitution,” because it cannot be found in a single place.

constitution, state: The fundamental laws of the separate states, authorized by an act of the Second Continental Congress on May 10, 1776. These documents represented efforts by each state to describe the organization of its government and typically included bills of rights.

Constitution, U.S.: Drafted in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787 and ratified by nine states by 1789, this is the “supreme law of the land” in the United States.

Declaration of Independence: The document signed by representatives of the 13 British mainland colonies south of Canada, expressing their belief in the right to govern themselves and enumerating the crimes of King George III, who is defined in the document as a tyrant.

factions: The term used to refer to a specific group of individuals motivated toward political action for their own ends. The term figured prominently in the debate about the U.S. Constitution and became one of the primary subjects of Federalist No. 10, written by James Madison.


Federalist Party: the group of individuals who coalesced around George Washington and John Adams in the 1790s; they supported a powerful federal government and such policies as the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

federalists: Individuals who supported the ratification of the United States Constitution after the Philadelphia convention of 1787.

House of Commons: The branch of the British Parliament that represented the people and contributed, according to 18th-century political theory, “virtue” to the governing system. Members of the House of Commons were elected.
House of Lords: The upper house of Parliament, which represented the landed aristocracy and contributed, according to 18th-century political theory, “wisdom” to the governing system. Members of the House of Lords were appointed, and many inherited their seats.

House of Representatives, U.S.: The lower house of the federal government, in which individuals are elected for two-year terms.

judicial review: The idea, finally established in the United States with the decision of Marbury v. Madison of 1803, that courts had the authority to rule on constitutional questions.

Judiciary Act of 1789: Congressional action, taken according to provisions in the U.S. Constitution, establishing the federal court system.

Loyalist: An individual who remained loyal to the king of England during (and, for many, after) the American Revolution.

Magna Carta: An act of 1215 binding the king of England into a system of laws, with subjects guaranteed certain liberties.

manumission: The act of freeing a slave.

Navigation Acts: Parliamentary legislation to regulate and tax the movement of goods within the British Empire, including the shipment of goods from the mainland North American colonies to ports in the Caribbean and Europe.

pacification: The term used to summarize the British military approach to the Revolutionary War, especially in the South, where the British hoped to quell the resistance movement.

pamphlet: A quickly produced and normally inexpensive short book; often used, as during the American Revolution, to express political ideas and arguments.

Parliament: The term for the House of Commons and the House of Lords, which together, along with the king, rule Britain and its overseas possessions.

party: A collection of individuals who seek political advantage by working together. Parties were in their formative stage during the 1790s.

petition: The document produced by individuals, in this era typically colonists, and sent to representatives with the expectation that those with political authority will be responsive to the will of the people as expressed in the petition.

philosophe: A French individual associated with the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment; philosophes were particularly prominent during the 18th century.

Republican mother: The ideological position of a free woman after the Revolution, who was to maintain a virtuous household so that her husband and sons would possess the virtue necessary to sustain the fledgling republic.

Senate, U.S.: The upper house of the federal government, in which individuals serve six-year terms.

Sons of Liberty: The first and most prominent extralegal assemblage of colonists, who worked together to overturn (through reason or intimidation) acts of Parliament they believed were dangerous to their liberty.

standing army: An army in peacetime, often seen as dangerous by those who feared the power of the state.

statute: An act of a legislative body, which by definition, could be overturned by a subsequent legislative body possessing the same powers as the group that authorized it.

tyrant: A ruler who acted despotically and denied his subjects their rights.

unicameral: A governing system with only one legislative branch.

veto: The ability of an executive to vacate a legislative act.

writ of assistance: A generalized form of search warrant, allowing British officials to look for contraband wherever they suspected it might be found. Such writs needed to be reauthorized within six months of the death of a monarch.
Adams, Abigail (1744–1818). Primarily known as the wife of John Adams, Abigail Adams was among the most articulate letter writers of the Revolutionary age. Her letters to her husband spoke directly to the issues of gender-based inequality that continued to exist at the time of the Revolution. She believed that the best time to alter historic discrimination toward women was during this period of political ferment, letting her husband know that all men would act as tyrants to their spouses if they had the opportunity. She did not explicitly seek full political rights for women, but she did seek increased educational opportunities.

Adams, John (1735–1826). Trained as a lawyer, Adams played a central role in the resistance movement from its earliest years in Massachusetts. Despite his sympathy for the incipient rebellion, he defended the British soldiers accused of perpetrating the Boston Massacre. He served in the First and Second Continental Congress, was an outspoken advocate for independence from Britain, and became a diplomat abroad during the Revolutionary War; he was also a principal author of the Massachusetts state constitution. Adams served as Washington’s vice president before becoming president in 1796. His administration authorized the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798, but those statutes became unenforceable with the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800. He died on July 4, 1826, the same day as Jefferson and the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Adams, Samuel (1722–1803). Samuel Adams was one of the earliest and most vocal proponents of the resistance movement in Boston. He was a member of the Sons of Liberty, among other groups active in the rebellion. He was instrumental in the establishment of Boston’s first Committee of Correspondence in 1772 and ran the Boston Town Meeting that ended shortly before the Boston Tea Party. After the Revolution, he remained a public figure and advocated harsh punishment for those involved in Shays’ Rebellion.

Burgoyne, John (1722–1792). A British military official best known in America for his participation in the ill-fated campaign to divide the resistance in 1777. Burgoyne arrived back in the colonies (he had been there earlier but without his leadership position) in 1777 with instructions to lead a contingent from Canada south toward Albany. There, he was scheduled to meet Sir William Howe, who was to have led his forces northward from Philadelphia. But Burgoyne’s campaign was mired in trouble, and by the time he faced the American general Horatio Gates at Saratoga, he stood little chance of victory. He surrendered his forces there, as well as himself. The Americans released him in 1778, and he returned to London, where he became a member of the Parliamentary opposition to the American war.

Dickinson, John (1732–1808). John Dickinson, trained as a lawyer, played a crucial role in the formation of the resistance movement. He was present at the Stamp Act Congress in New York in 1765. His Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, which he wrote to protest the Townshend duties, was widely reprinted in the late 1760s. Yet despite his views, Dickinson, who was a member of the Continental Congress, opposed the Declaration of Independence, fearing that such an action would lead to the defeat of the colonists. Nonetheless, Dickinson was the primary author of the Articles of Confederation.

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790). Printer, inventor, and scientist, Benjamin Franklin was the most famous American of the 18th century, with a reputation that stretched across the Atlantic Ocean. Born in Boston, Franklin moved to Philadelphia in 1723, where he rose through the ranks of colonial society on a personal journey recounted in his Autobiography. In 1754, he proposed a plan of union of the colonies at a meeting in Albany, but nothing came of that action. He went to London to work for the colony of Pennsylvania and later became the agent for three other colonies. Franklin had sought reconciliation but, instead, was humiliated by British officials and returned to Philadelphia to serve in the Second Continental Congress, before returning to Europe on a diplomatic mission to seek an alliance with France. Replaced in 1785 by Thomas Jefferson, Franklin returned to Philadelphia in time for the Constitutional Convention, where he delivered the final speech, which was then widely distributed.

George III (1738–1820). George III was 22 years old when he became king after the death of his grandfather. Almost immediately, he shook up the coalition that had surrounded the court and tried to exert more active control over the ministry, an effort that led to instability at the highest levels of the British administration during the 1760s. Colonists eventually held him personally responsible for ignoring their petitions, which they saw as his implication in the ministerial plot to deprive them of their liberty. He authorized the military invasion of the colonies that furthered the rebellion, believing that the loss of his American territory could be the end of the empire.
point, George was wrong, but his actions nonetheless caused his onetime subjects to see him as a tyrant who had committed a series of actions that justified their move toward independence.

**Hamilton, Alexander** (1757–1804). Alexander Hamilton was a young man when the Revolutionary War began, but by 1777, he had risen through the Continental Army to become an aide-de-camp to George Washington. After the war, he emerged again as a public figure in the debate over the Constitution in New York, authoring many of the essays in *The Federalist* papers, including a strong defense of the idea of the federal judiciary. He served as secretary of the treasury in Washington’s administration and was a forceful advocate for the development of the American economy, even though that action put him in opposition to Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of state, who wanted America to retain its agricultural focus. He died after suffering a mortal wound in a duel with Aaron Burr in 1804.

**Henry, Patrick** (1736–1799). Patrick Henry became a member of the House of Burgesses in Virginia in 1765, just in time to protest the Stamp Act. From that moment forward, he became a leader of the resistance to British rule. Famous for his long speeches (and for purportedly stating, “Give me liberty or give me death,” though scholars cannot prove that he actually said that), Henry was a frequent advocate for his state, which rewarded him by making him its first governor after independence. His belief in the importance of state power and sovereignty led him to become one of the most outspoken and articulate of the antifederalists.

**Howe, Sir William** (1729–1814). William Howe was the commander-in-chief of British forces in America from the start of the Revolutionary War until he resigned in 1777 in the wake of the disastrous northern campaign that had led to the surrender of John Burgoyne. Howe typically commanded forces that were better trained and armed than the Continental Army, yet he never pressed his advantage. After he returned to Britain, he was accused of running a “sentimental” kind of war, incapable of delivering the kind of devastating blow that could destroy the Continental Army. Rather than dismissing Howe as an inferior military leader, it is better to understand him as a commander who knew that if he turned his troops loose, he might prevail on the battlefield but lose the battle for the hearts and minds of the American people.

**Hutchinson, Thomas** (1711–1780). Trained as a lawyer, Thomas Hutchinson rose through the provincial establishment, eventually becoming governor in 1771. But during the rebellion, his loyalism led him to become the most despised man in Massachusetts. Stamp Act rioters destroyed his house in 1765, even though Hutchinson himself was an opponent of the act but felt that as a provincial official, he had to enforce it. He left Massachusetts in 1774 and traveled to England. There, on July 4, 1776, he received an honorary degree at Oxford for his service to the empire.

**Jefferson, Thomas** (1743–1826). Best known for being the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson was also a farmer, diplomat, public official, and primary founder of the University of Virginia. During the war, Jefferson was governor of Virginia (1779–1781), and after it ended, he served in Congress (1783–1784) before representing the United States in France (1785–1789), where he learned about the social problems caused by long-term maldistribution of wealth. After he returned, he continued to serve the public, as Washington’s secretary of state and John Adams’s vice president, before his election to the presidency in 1800. Jefferson became an advocate of the expansion of the nation with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which supported his vision of an economy and society dominated by freeholders. His Statute for Religious Freedom, which he wrote in 1777, became established in law in 1786.

**Madison, James** (1751–1836). Madison, who would eventually become the fourth president of the United States (following Jefferson), rose to prominence, not during the resistance movement, but instead, during the discussion of a new plan for a national government. He attended the meeting in Annapolis in 1786 to revise the Articles of Confederation but made his mark in Philadelphia the next year when he shaped what became known as the Virginia Plan, which laid out much of what emerged in the U.S. Constitution. He then played a determining role in the debate over the Constitution as the most important of the three authors of *The Federalist* papers. As a promise to others who feared the lack of any clear statement protecting individual rights, Madison became the primary architect of the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, now known as the Bill of Rights. Later in the decade, he used the constitutional ideas he had championed to battle the Alien and Sedition Acts.

**Otis, James** (1725–1783). James Otis, a rising star in the Anglo-American judicial establishment, turned down an opportunity to be the king’s advocate general of the Boston-based vice-admiralty court when his father, known as Col. James Otis, was passed over for a seat on the province’s supreme court. He soon took a case defending a group
of merchants who wanted to avoid having their ships searched. The Writs of Assistance case thrust Otis into the spotlight of the incipient resistance movement, where he remained as a member of the Massachusetts general court and the author of pamphlets decrying purported British violations of colonists’ rights. By the late 1760s, however, Otis began to suffer periods of insanity, which limited his role as a public figure until his death, reportedly from a bolt of lightning in 1783.

**Paine, Thomas** (1737–1809). An English-born failed artisan, Paine arrived in Philadelphia in late November 1774 and quickly became involved in the resistance movement. Fourteen months later, he published *Common Sense*, which immediately became the most celebrated and widely read pamphlet of the pre-independence period. During the war, Paine continued to write, putting his efforts toward *The American Crisis*, which appeared in 1779. In 1787, he returned to England and, eventually, to political writing with his *Rights of Man*, published in 1791 and 1792 in response to British criticism of the French Revolution. Paine moved to France, published *The Age of Reason*, served a stint in the Luxembourg Prison, and finally returned to the United States in 1802, where he faded from public view on a farm in New Rochelle, New York. He died there in 1809.

**Warren, Mercy Otis** (1728–1814). As the sister of James Otis, it was perhaps not surprising that Mercy Otis Warren would take the side of the resistance in the move toward independence. But she achieved fame as the author of one of the earliest accounts of the *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*, which was published in three volumes in 1805. Though she was also a playwright, having written *The Adulateur* in 1773 and *The Group* in 1775, she is best known for the vigorous and highly charged prose of her *History*. Like other historical writers of her age, she often focused on the personalities of those involved and created a devastating portrait of Thomas Hutchinson.

**Washington, George** (1732–1799). Washington first emerged on the public scene as a young military officer in the run-up to what became the Seven Years’ War, but he found lasting fame as the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, which he led through virtually the entire war. His letters to Congress during the war provided both progress reports and included repeated requests for supplies. He kept the army together during its darkest days, when the British defeated his forces around New York and again at Brandywine and Germantown before the gloomy winter at Valley Forge. But Washington was capable of great military strokes, too, none more famous than his raids on Trenton and Princeton. When the last British soldiers finally departed New York in 1783, he went to Annapolis and resigned his commission. Six years later, he emerged as the first president of the United States and returned to private life after two terms, establishing a precedent (not yet in the Constitution) that remained in place until the 20th century.
Bibliography

Essential Reading:

Ackerman, Bruce. The Failure of the Founding Fathers: Jefferson, Madison, and the Rise of Presidential Democracy. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005. This book by a prominent legal historian and political scientist takes a critical look at the founding era and contains detailed accounts of important moments, such as the election of 1800.

Ammerman, David. In the Common Cause: American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974. The most useful study of the emergence of the extra-legal committees that provided the infrastructure for the rebellion.

Anderson, Fred. Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766. New York: Knopf, 2000. This monumental book considers the Seven Years’ War, often known as the French and Indian War to Americans, in its global context. It is a masterpiece of historical research.


———. The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967; enlarged edition, 1992. This Pulitzer Prize–winning account is the most important single book ever written about the American Revolution and the foundational text for much of this course. No other historian has so successfully explained the sources of the ideas that propelled the Revolution forward.

———. The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974. Bailyn followed his landmark Ideological Origins with this study of Hutchinson, one of the most reviled figures during the period of the Revolution. The Hutchinson who emerges in this sympathetic study, which won the National Book Award, bears little resemblance to the caricatures offered by his contemporary enemies.


Bodle, Wayne K. The Valley Forge Winter: Civilians and Soldiers in War. University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 2002. This volume presents a detailed and poignant study of some of the darkest days faced by Washington’s army.

Brewer, John. Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. While many American historians were deep into their discussion of the American Revolution during the bicentennial, the British historian Brewer produced this account, which explained how politics actually worked at the moment when the imperial system began to fracture.

Calloway, Colin G. The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Calloway’s book, which consists primarily of a series of chapters focused on particular regions, demonstrates that the Revolution was not a single event for natives but, rather, an affair that was often characterized by local concerns, including preexisting relations between Indians and their neighbors.

the more provocative works produced by the bicentennial, Christie and Labaree did just that, and their book is a reminder of how one’s perspective can change depending on the angle of the historian’s vision.

Crèvecoeur, Hector St. John de. *Letters from an American Farmer*. First published in 1782; available in multiple editions. Crèvecoeur’s essays, especially his “What is an American?” have become crucial documents in our understanding of the American character in the 18th century.

Crow, Jeffrey J., and Larry E. Tise, eds. *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978. This collection of articles looks at the ways in which the Revolution altered the lives of diverse populations of southerners, including superb essays on regional political culture (by Jack P. Greene), women (by Mary Beth Norton), military strategy (by John Shy), and slavery (by Peter H. Wood).


Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency: George Washington*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Ellis uses his extraordinary talents to explain the life of Washington, a man whose history is so encrusted with myth that the individual beneath has been hard to locate.

Farrand, Max. *The Framing of the Constitution of the United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913. Though Farrand’s book is now almost a century old, it remains a superb account of the debates in the Philadelphia convention. Farrand was also the editor of the most detailed accounts of the convention (see Supplementary Reading, below).


Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography*. Edited by Louis P. Masur. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1993. Franklin’s book can be found in many editions; this edition has the benefit of including an excellent introduction and a series of images of Franklin which show the evolution in both his appearance and the ways that others understood him during his long life and career.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. This collection includes Geertz’s work on the nature of ideologies, which has shaped the way that the term is used in this course.


Greene, Jack P. *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Polities of the British Empire and the United States, 1607–1788*. New York: Norton, 1986. In this study of political culture across the British Empire, Greene shows that it is crucial to set American developments into a wider context, even when American historical forces seem to be sui generis.

Gross, Robert A. The Minutemen and Their World. New York: Hill and Wang, 1976. This detailed study of the social and political worlds of Concord, Massachusetts, combines the analytical framework of a classic New England town study with a smoothly written narrative of the effects of the war.


Hamilton, Alexander, John Jay, and James Madison. The Federalist. Edited by Jacob E. Cooke. First published as a series of articles signed by “Publius” as part of the debate on the Constitution in the state of New York, The Federalist papers were soon published as a book and have probably been in print ever since. There are many editions now available of this fundamental text, which is frequently assigned in classes and has been cited numerous times in court decisions. This definitive edition includes excellent notes explaining key portions of the text.

Hinderaker, Eric, and Peter C. Mancall. At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. In this study of the colonial hinterland, Hinderaker and Mancall argue that many of the problems of the 1760s arose because of British efforts to exert control over the American backcountry.


Kammen, Michael. A Rope of Sand: The Colonial Agents, British Politics, and the American Revolution. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968. This is a vibrant study of the individuals who played a crucial role in maintaining communication between London and the mainland colonies. As Kammen demonstrates, colonial agents were crucial in the workings of an often precarious political system.

Kenyon, Cecelia M., ed. The Antifederalists. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1966; reprint, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985. This volume is the most thorough edition of the writings of the individuals who opposed the U.S. Constitution during the ratification process.

Kerber, Linda. Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1980. This is a landmark book that illuminates the ways in which the Revolution altered the lives of women. Kerber put forward the concept of the “republican mother,” which has been widely embraced by other scholars.

Kurtz, Stephen G., and James H. Hutson, eds. Essays on the American Revolution. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1973. As the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence approached, many scholars turned their attention to issues raised by the Revolution. This volume, the product of a symposium in 1971, brings together some of the leading scholars of that age; the papers they produced remain central to our understanding of the era.

Locke, John. Two Treatises on Government. Edited by Ian Shapiro. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. Locke’s Two Treatises has been reprinted many times, a sign of the importance of his views to all subsequent discussions about the nature of the state and its relation to those who live within it. Though Locke wrote in the late seventeenth century, his views had a powerful effect on the American revolutionaries. This edition has the benefit of including his “Letter Concerning Toleration.”

Maier, Pauline. American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence. New York: Knopf, 1997. Maier, whose study of the opposition to England propelled her into the front ranks of Revolutionary historians, has here written a penetrating analysis of the most sacred text in the American canon. A detailed account about the processes through which the Declaration of Independence emerged and then became a crucial document in American history...
and culture. As in her other work, the great strength of this book lies in Maier’s deep immersion into the kinds of primary source materials that give life to long-dead and often obscure historical actors.


Marshall, P. J., ed. *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. By providing a comprehensive picture of the entire empire during the 18th century, the essays in this volume help situate the American movement for independence into a larger British world. Excellent essays touch on the far-flung parts of the empire and include several that are directly about the American scene.

Morgan, Edmund S. *Benjamin Franklin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. Morgan’s biography of Franklin is based entirely on his reading of the luminary’s papers, which he places in the context of his deep understanding of early American history. The book is frequently poignant and allows Franklin to speak for himself across the centuries.


Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense and Related Writings*. Edited by Thomas Slaughter. Boston: Bedford Books/St. Martin's Press, 2001. First published in 1776; available in many editions. Paine needs to be read to be understood, and all modern readers should celebrate the fact that his words can be found easily. More than 200 years later, *Common Sense* still has the capacity to shock.

Rakove, Jack. *The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress*. New York: Knopf, 1979. Rakove dug deep into the records of the first national government to produce this book, the most thorough and persuasive of any account of the rise of the national government, primarily in the 1770s.


Stone, Geoffrey R. *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1789 to the War on Terrorism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004. Stone’s remarkable and chilling book demonstrates how the federal government has often believed it necessary to curtail free speech in times of crisis. His account serves as a warning that individual liberties have often been limited and difficult to recover.

Taafee, Stephen R. *The Philadelphia Campaign, 1777–1778*. Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2003. This richly detailed portrait of the Philadelphia region during the decisive year of 1777–1778 shows the kinds of insights that historians can have if they turn their attention to localities in times of crisis.


Warren, Mercy Otis. *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*. Two volumes. Boston, 1805; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988. Warren was among the first historians to consider the American Revolution as a historical event, and her account breathes life into countless Revolutionary figures, many of whom she knew personally. The modern reprint of this book was a great boon to readers interested in the writing of history in the Revolutionary age.

Wood, Gordon. *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Viking, 2004. This is a superb study of Franklin, the most famous American of the 18th century. Wood’s focus on the process whereby Franklin became an international symbol of Americans, then contemplated life in Europe, and finally embraced his homeland is filled with fascinating details.


———. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Knopf, 1992. Wood’s successful follow-up to his study of the process of constitution-writing, this book emphasizes the changes in the ways that Americans understood—and addressed—each other. Wood makes a compelling case that the “radicalism” of the Revolution should not be sought in social or economic changes but, instead, in the creation of a democratic society out of a monarchical heritage.


**Supplementary Reading:**


Bailyn, Bernard. *Faces of Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence*. New York: Knopf, 1990. This book brings together some of Bailyn’s most important individual essays, including insightful portraits of crucial Revolutionary figures, such as Thomas Hutchinson, John Adams, and Thomas Paine, as well as a Massachusetts artisan named Harbottle Dorr who annotated Boston’s newspapers.

Bailyn, Bernard, ed. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution*, Volume I: 1750–1765. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965. The pamphlets in this vital collection are crucial components in Bailyn’s study of the origins of the Revolution. The book would be listed under Essential Reading, but it is now out of print; however, it is available at better libraries.

Early American History and Culture, 1987. Just as historians had gathered together to contemplate the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1976, they did so again in preparation for the 200th birthday of the U.S. Constitution. This collection brings together thoughtful pieces not only about the Constitution itself but about American culture at the time.


Carp, E. Wayne. *To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775–1783*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. Carp’s study discusses the fact that the Continental Army often had inadequate resources even while the fate of the independence movement relied on its abilities to win against a better-armed opponent.


David Brion Davis. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. An overview of the nature of slavery in the modern world, studded with insights about the debates over slavery and the changes in slaves’ lives during the period before and after the American Revolution.

Ellis, Joseph J. *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Knopf, 1996. Ellis here offers a perceptive analysis of Jefferson less as a public statesman than as a human being, primarily by focusing on his life at certain key times, including his stints in Philadelphia in the mid-1770s, Paris in the late 1780s, and Washington during his first administration.


Horwitz, Morton J. *The Transformation of American Law, 1780–1860*. Cambridge, Mass.: 1977. Though this study is not focused on the Revolution itself, it reveals the ways in which the legal system created by the Revolution fostered economic development in the early American Republic.


Jameson, J. Franklin. *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926. This venerable study, which should be in any decent library, remains a classic analysis of the social and economic dimensions of the Revolution.


Jensen, Merrill, ed. *English Historical Documents*, volume IX: *American Colonial Documents to 1776*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955. Jensen’s volume, no longer in print but available in good libraries, was part of a series of English documents put out by Oxford. It remains, 50 years after it was published, an almost unparalleled source for primary materials, especially the text of important acts and state papers. If this book were still in print, it would be listed under Essential Reading, above.


Mancall, Peter C. *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995. This study of the role of alcohol in the fur and deerskin trades shows how intercultural trade shaped native communities, often to the detriment of the Indians.

Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991. This study focuses on one extensive hinterland through the era of the Revolution and shows how the political movement and the changes it produced influenced life in the backcountry.


McCoy, Drew R. The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. A poignant study not only of Madison but by some who followed him and tried to understand the nation that the Revolution had brought into existence.


Merrell, James H. The Indians’ New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1989. Merrell’s study of the Catawbas remains among the most significant efforts to understand how any native people coped with colonialism and, in this instance, how the Revolution shaped the fates of Indians who remained in the East.


Nash, Gary B. The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America. New York: Viking, 2005. In this richly detailed volume, Nash brings to life the stories of many Americans in the age of the Revolution who have been overlooked by other historians. As he suggests, radicalism could be found in many locales from the 1760s through the 1780s.


Peterson, Merrill D. Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1976. This brief but penetrating study explores relations between two of the most important and well-documented of the Founders.

Plumb, J. H. The First Four Georges. London: Batsford, 1956; reprint, London: Fontana/Collins, 1966. Plumb tried to rescue the reputations of these Hanoverians by portraying “these Georges as human beings caught in exceptional
circumstances.” Fifty years after he wrote his brief book, his reflections—especially on George III—remain worthwhile.


Schiff, Stacy. A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America. New York: Holt, 2005. This recent biography of Franklin, one of a number generated by scholars on the approach of the tercentenary of Franklin’s birth, concentrates on Franklin’s time in France during the war for independence.

Smith, Maurice H. The Writs of Assistance Case. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. This is a long and dense study of the legal aspects of writs of assistance, with particular attention to the case in Boston in 1761.


Tudor, William. The Life of James Otis of Massachusetts. Published in Boston in 1823, this study has unfortunately been long out of print. However, it should be possible to find it in better research libraries, and it is worth the effort because Tudor writes about Otis as a sympathetic contemporary and includes details of his life that cannot be found elsewhere.

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1990. In this book Ulrich has reconstructed the life and social networks of a midwife who practiced in Maine during the era of the nation’s founding. Ulrich’s extraordinary account, which has inspired a film, shows how persistent archival work combined with enormous energy can uncover daily life in a one-time hinterland of the United States.

Wallace, Anthony F. C. The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca. New York: Knopf, 1970. Despite the explosion of works relating to Native American history, Wallace’s description of this Iroquois Nation remains a far-reaching and imminently important account of how one native people coped with—and responded to—the challenges posed by the American Revolution.


Young, Alfred F. The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution. Boston: Beacon, 1999. Young’s account of a Boston shoemaker and his later understanding of the Revolution reveals the different ways that the great political moments of the resistance movement came to shape individual lives during and after the Revolution.

Resources Available at Subscribing Research Libraries:

Pennsylvania Gazette. The complete, searchable text of the most important newspaper in the Anglo-American mainland colonies in the eighteenth century.

Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (known as ECCO). Includes the full text of every book or pamphlet published in England in the eighteenth century.

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Evans Early American Imprints. Includes the full text of all books and pamphlets produced in the mainland Anglo-American colonies and the early United States to 1800.

Internet Resources:
The Founders’ Constitution (http://press-pubs.chicago.edu/founders/). This is the most thorough site for materials relating to Constitutional history.
Avalon Project at Yale Law School (www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm). An unparalleled source for documents issued by national governments and states, including English documents dating back to Magna Carta and crucial state documents from the Revolutionary period, including state constitutions.
Adams Family Papers (www.masshist.org/digitaladams). The complete correspondence between John and Abigail Adams can be found here, along with John Adams’s Diary and his Autobiography. The correspondence between John Adams and Abigail Adams contains insights on issues large and small, including his comments during his various political positions and her observations of American life during the war and, later, as First Lady in the late 1790s.
Colonial Williamsburg (www.history.org). This site provides a virtual recreation of Williamsburg during the eighteenth century.
National Constitution Center (www.constitutioncenter.org). This site for the newly created National Constitution Center in Philadelphia provides links to many documents relating to the Founding, as well as links to sites for other aspects of the history of the most important city in the mainland Anglo-American colonies.
American Memory Project (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem). This online project of the Library of Congress presents primary sources for virtually any aspect of the American experience, with scans of over three thousand documents relating to directly to the American Revolution and its role in American culture.
Origins and Ideologies of the American Revolution
Part II
Professor Peter C. Mancall
Peter C. Mancall, Professor of History and Anthropology, University of Southern California, and Director, USC–Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute

Peter C. Mancall, whose historical work centers on early American history, Native American history, and the history of the early modern Atlantic world, is Professor of History and Anthropology at the University of Southern California. He is also the first Director of the USC–Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute, an interdisciplinary partnership between USC and the Huntington Library in nearby San Marino, California. From 2002 to 2004, Dr. Mancall served as president of the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction, an international group of scholars who study the early modern era.

Professor Mancall has taught at the University of Southern California since 2001. After receiving his A.B. degree from Oberlin College in 1981, he went to Harvard, where he studied with Bernard Bailyn and received his Ph.D. in 1986. Before moving to Los Angeles, he was a lecturer on history and literature at Harvard and then on the faculty at the University of Kansas from 1989 to 2001, where he won two teaching awards. In 2004, he was a Gamma Sigma Alpha professor of the year at USC.


Dr. Mancall’s work has been featured on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” and in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and it has been reviewed in journals in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and across Europe. In 1998, after his work had come to the attention of the World Health Organization, Dr. Mancall was the inaugural ALAC Research Fellow of the Health Research Centre of New Zealand. His research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and the American Philosophical Society, among others. He has consulted with movie studios about documentary and feature films and has been filmed for a four-part international documentary on the history of genocide. Dr. Mancall regularly consults with teachers from the Los Angeles Unified School District through the Teaching American History program and is on the editorial boards of four scholarly journals.

He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, the medieval historian Lisa Bitel, and their two children.
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Origins and Ideologies of the American Revolution

Scope:

The American Revolution was the most important event in our country’s history. What began as a protest movement against relatively minor taxes in the 1760s became by 1776 a movement for independence cloaked in the rhetoric of universal equality. By the time the new century opened, the Revolution had spawned a federal system of government and a bill of rights that remain at the heart of the United States today.

This 18th-century revolution was not based on self-interest, class conflict, or partisan politics. Instead it grew from several core ideas, all expressed to some extent in the Declaration of Independence: equality of all people, the ability to pursue one’s own path without undue government burdens, and the desire to live free of tyranny. American revolutionaries redefined the relationship between the individual and the state. After 1776, Americans were no longer subjects of a monarch. They had become sovereign citizens of a nation who granted to governments specified powers to maintain order and promote the common good.

This course emphasizes the role of ideas in the age of the American Revolution. After analyzing how ideas circulated in the American colonies and more broadly in the Atlantic world (Lecture Two), and surveying the population of the colonies and their place in the Atlantic community (Lectures Three through Five), the course moves chronologically through the major developments of the period from 1760 to 1800. The origins of the Revolution can be seen in the changes in the workings of the empire after victory in the Seven Years’ War (Lecture Six) and the shifts in British politics with the accession of King George III (Lectures Seven through Nine). The first glimmer of what became the Revolution appeared in a Boston courtroom in 1761, when the lawyer James Otis took the case of merchants who would rather smuggle goods into port than pay duties on them (Lecture Ten). From that improbable beginning, a resistance movement began to grow across the Anglo-American mainland colonies, and especially in Massachusetts.

During the early 1760s, the British government, faced with high debts from the Seven Years’ War, tried to raise funds by taxing its American colonists (Lecture Eleven). The colonists for their part protested at each stage, often expressing their concerns in pamphlets and newspaper articles that revealed a deep understanding of political theory and history. By 1765, colonists had taken to the streets to protest the Stamp Act (Lecture Twelve), prompting Parliament to repeal the odious measure but to pass new legislation declaring its unlimited right to pass legislation for the colonies (Lecture Thirteen). Over the next five years, political attitudes hardened on both sides (Lectures Fourteen and Fifteen), even as Benjamin Franklin sought ways to ease the crisis (Lecture Sixteen). In 1768, British soldiers arrived in Boston, and two years later, some of them killed five Americans in the so-called “Boston Massacre,” an event that quickly took on unprecedented notoriety through rebels’ efforts to publicize it (Lecture Seventeen).

By the middle of the 1770s, colonists and the British, despite many efforts by both sides to reduce tensions, were at war (Lectures Eighteen through Twenty-Two). Common Sense, a pamphlet by the recent immigrant Thomas Paine, became the widest circulated political tract of its time despite, or perhaps because of, prose so inflammatory that even the revolutionary John Adams questioned its validity (Lecture Twenty-Three). Soon after its publication, the British moved their base of operations from Boston to New York, where they remained until the end of the war (Lecture Twenty-Four).

It was not until July 1776 that the colonists, having reached the conclusion that George III was a tyrant, made a formal declaration of their desire to be a separate nation (Lecture Twenty-Five). Even then there was no consensus on the part of Americans about what the “United States” would look like. As war spread through eastern North America, military hostilities became a form of political education for Americans, who soon became all-too-familiar with epochal scenes of a nascent national drama. Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Princeton, Trenton, Saratoga, and Valley Forge all entered the consciousness of the American people (Lectures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven). In the midst of reports of battles against a far more powerful army, supported by the strongest Atlantic fleet of its time, ordinary Americans also learned about the ideas that motivated and sustained the movement for independence.

During the war Americans, who were not even sure they would emerge victorious, set about to create their own governments. They began at the state level, drafting constitutions intended to become fundamental laws. These constitutions laid out how governments were to operate and explained why such governments were legitimate expressions of the will of the people (Lecture Twenty-Eight). At the same time Thomas Jefferson drafted a statute
for religious freedom for Virginia, a state act that remains perhaps the most significant legislation of the founding era (Lecture Twenty-Nine). Some Americans also began work on plans for a national government, though that remained a secondary concern until the war ended. Despite an alliance with France (Lecture Thirty) and the creation of a plan for a national government (Lecture Thirty-One), the war ground on until the British surrender at Yorktown (Lecture Thirty-Two) and the signing of the peace treaty in Paris in 1783 (Lecture Thirty-Three).

The end of the war did not solve the new nation’s problems. During the 1780s, the United States faced a series of crises (Lecture thirty-four) and slavery remained a dominant social and economic institution throughout the south despite the fact that its continued existence stood in stark contrast to central ideals of the Revolution (Lecture Thirty-Five). By the middle of the 1780s, discussion about the need for a better organized national system led to the calling of what became the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 (Lecture Thirty-Six). Those in attendance tried to devise a system that would recognize the sovereignty of each state while at the same time forging a union that would bring them together. When leaders of that congress finally produced a document, Americans entered into the most sustained debate about the nature of power in their history. Their discussion produced brilliant assessments of human character and ideas about the ways to control personal ambition for the good of the whole. Many thoughtful Americans, including some who had battled against the British, believed that the Constitution was a recipe for the rise of a new kind of tyrant. But the document was ratified because its proponents, including the authors of The Federalist papers, devised rhetoric sufficient to assuage reasonable fears. Nonetheless, by the early 1790s even James Madison, the primary architect of the Constitution, recognized the need for a series of amendments known as the Bill of Rights, which provided further protection for individuals against government abuses (Lectures Thirty-Eight through Forty).

The greatest documents of the Revolutionary age—the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, and the Constitution with its Bill of Rights—spoke a universal language. These statements of political ideals and American identity pointed to a bright national future. Few could have anticipated the political struggles that subsequently divided Americans during the 1790s (Lectures Forty-One and Forty-Two), but the election of 1800 (Lecture Forty-Three) demonstrated that the system created by the Revolution could withstand the shift from one political party to another. By then it was clear that the rebellion had a mixed legacy; neither Native Americans nor women were able to share in its benefits at the time, nor did it lead to the equalization of property in the society (Lectures Forty-Four through Forty-Six). The Revolution’s immediate effects could be seen in the views of some of those who lived through it and provided posterity with descriptions of how it changed American society (Lecture Forty-Seven). Despite its limitations, the Revolution established an ideology of expansive liberty, which Americans turned to in virtually all later efforts to improve their condition (Lecture Forty-Eight). We continue to do so today.
Lecture Thirteen
Parliament Digs in Its Heels, 1766–1767

Scope: News of the Stamp Act protests and riots reached London in 1766, and members of the government repealed the odious legislation. But they passed the Declaratory Act, which claimed that Parliament had jurisdiction over the colonies “in all cases whatsoever.” Though this bill could have enraged colonists, who would have disputed it for the same reasons that they protested the Stamp Act, it was instead greeted with a collective shrug. Colonists had no need to listen to such Parliamentary statements; their actions in the streets and Parliament’s response to them indicated that although the British government might claim the authority to issue any edicts it chose, it lacked the mechanism to enforce them. Having learned a lesson from the debacle of 1765, the British also took the opportunity to increase the number of officials stationed in the colonies to enforce the new legislation. To Parliament, the duties seemed a logical way to raise revenue and could not be challenged because they fit under the logic of the Declaratory Act. To colonists, the duties were yet another affront. This time, they resisted nonviolently, establishing a system of boycotting the purchase of goods (notably imports from Britain) that would have required payment of a new duty. Known as non-importation, this political movement demonstrated the colonists’ increased political sophistication, especially their ability to counter British acts with effective responses.

Outline

I. In response to colonial protests, the British Parliament repealed the Stamp Act.
   A. The action revealed that colonists could still shape British imperial policies.
      1. Parliament acted after hearing from colonists that the statute was dangerous.
      2. Colonists and members of the British government each believed that the problem posed by the act could be solved through repeal.
   B. The repeal convinced colonists that their petitions to London made the difference.
      1. Many believed that the use of violence against stamp collectors was a crucial part of the protest.
      2. The repeal convinced most colonists that the imperial system could still benefit all subjects of the king.

II. Parliament then passed the Declaratory Act.
   A. The Declaratory Act was an effort by Parliament to clarify its authority over colonists.
      1. The act gave Parliament authority to enact legislation for the colonies “in all cases whatsoever.”
      2. This action represented a shift in Parliament’s understanding of its relations with the American colonists.
   B. Colonists paid no attention to the act.
      1. Because the Declaratory Act had no immediate economic or other effects, colonists generally ignored it.
      2. Colonists continued to believe that they should not be governed from London.

III. The continued need for revenue prompted Parliament to pass the Townshend duties.
   A. The duties laid out a new series of taxes that American colonists needed to pay.
      1. The duties specifically taxed manufactured imported goods.
      2. The English had always believed that colonists would be consumers of these goods and lacked the ability to produce them for themselves.
   B. The passage of the duties revealed that Parliament had not wavered from its decision to tax colonists directly.
      1. Parliament’s assertion of its views fit the spirit of the Declaratory Act but ignored colonists’ protests.
      2. The expanded range of commodities to be taxed revealed Parliament’s desperate needs for funds, which could not be raised domestically.
IV. Parliament’s resolve became evident when it prepared to send soldiers to North America to enforce the duties and suppress any dissent.
   A. This action convinced many colonists that their liberties were being endangered by the presence of a “standing army” sent to the colonies to prevent the kinds of violence that followed the initial passage of the Stamp Act.
   B. British imperial officials had no problem with stationing troops on what all believed was British soil.
   C. The presence of the troops in the colonies would have fit the spirit of the Declaratory Act, which had given Parliament clear authority to regulate affairs in the colonies.

V. Colonists responded to the Townshend duties nonviolently.
   A. They decided that they would boycott the purchase of goods, especially those from Britain, that required payment of a duty.
   B. This movement came to be known as non-importation, and its development reflected colonists’ increased political sophistication.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did colonists feel free to ignore the Declaratory Act?
2. What did the repeal of the Stamp Act reveal about the ways that political ideas traveled across the Atlantic Ocean in the 1760s?
3. Could nonviolent protests, such as non-importation, have made a difference in the long run?
Lecture Fourteen
The Crisis of Representation

Scope: When James Otis attacked the idea of a writ of assistance in 1761, he and the merchants found little support for their notion that colonists could lawfully disobey an order of the king or Parliament. By the late 1760s, the political arena bore little resemblance to the situation less than a decade earlier. Thanks to an aggressive political campaign spread through cheaply produced pamphlets, resistance leaders, such as John Dickinson of Pennsylvania, gave shape to what might otherwise have been an inchoate series of actions. By the time colonists organized their non-importation movement, they had articulated ideas that would remain central to their new conception of the political world. They would no longer accept the idea that they were “virtually” represented in Parliament; they demanded actual representation instead. They refused to pay taxes without giving consent to them. And they had begun to explore the idea that they possessed rights that could not be deprived by any government. There was no consensus among the rebels, but there was, by 1770, a common language of resistance. That language shaped every political dispute from the spring of 1770 to the summer of 1776. Still, the colonists were not yet united. Tensions broke out, especially in the hinterland, where backcountry settlers—including the Paxton Boys in Pennsylvania, the Regulators in the Carolinas, and Ethan Allen in northern New England—directed their grievances at coastal elites and politicians, whom they blamed for their problems.

Outline

I. By the late 1760s, the dispute over representation became crucial to the looming political crisis.
   A. Parliament believed that colonists already had virtual representation in Britain.
      1. Their idea was based on the presumed uniformity of interest among British people, wherever they lived.
      2. Many people in Britain itself did not play a direct role in choosing the members of the House of Commons.
   B. Colonists began to argue that their interests were not represented.
      1. Those in the resistance movement wanted to create a system in which Anglo-American colonists chose members to represent them in Parliament.
      2. This notion of actual representation fit colonists’ history.

II. The dispute over taxes revealed the colonists’ understanding of British political theory.
   A. Within this political system, property had a value essentially equal to life itself.
      1. The expansion in the number of British capital offenses from the 17th to the 18th century (e.g., in the Waltham “Black Act” of 1723) revealed that the love of property was enshrined in the political system.
      2. The ideas expressed by Otis in the Writs of Assistance case remained powerful, even though his merchant clients had lost.
   B. Colonists’ views on property were evident in the development of slavery in the mainland.

III. As matters of high politics roiled international affairs, groups of colonists in the hinterland began to seek local political control.
   A. Some signs of such political stirrings emerged at the end of the Seven Years’ War in Pennsylvania, when the so-called Paxton Boys decided to take control of local affairs in the backcountry.
      1. Their first act was to kill a group of peaceful Conestoga Indians then living in Lancaster.
      2. They then set out on a march to Philadelphia and a confrontation with provincial authorities.
      3. Under the political leadership of Benjamin Franklin and others, the colony’s government suppressed the Paxton Boys’ march.
   B. In the Carolinas, the Regulators established themselves as authorities to be reckoned with in the hinterland.
      1. They took it upon themselves to govern territory that had mostly been beyond the interests of the eastern political establishment.
2. They established themselves as an extralegal government, capable of policing the region and chasing criminals away.

C. Ethan Allen and his followers, known as the Green Mountain Boys, began to agitate for increased political recognition.

IV. Colonists launched the movement known as non-importation.
   A. In order to protest the Townshend duties, colonists agreed not to import any goods for which they would have to pay a tax.
      1. Though voluntary on the surface, the non-importation movement relied on coercion to succeed.
      2. Colonists supporting the resistance harassed merchants who continued to import British goods.
   B. The non-importation movement had mixed success.
      1. Many colonists agreed to halt purchases of British manufactured goods, which had a detrimental effect on suppliers.
      2. The duties remained in place, at least for the time.

V. John Dickinson published his *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer*.
   A. Dickinson, the son of a wealthy Maryland landowner, had trained for a career in the law in the 1750s.
      1. From 1753 to 1757, he actually studied law at the Middle Temple in London, one of the city’s most elite legal establishments.
      2. On his return, he established himself as a lawyer in Philadelphia.
      3. His first major work during the political crisis was a 1765 pamphlet entitled *The Late Regulations respecting the British Colonies…Considered*, which he published to protest the Stamp Act.
   B. The appearance of *Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer* in 1767 brought the idea of ordered resistance into more sustained public discussion.
      1. Despite the hostility toward the British, Dickinson did not advocate violent resistance.
      2. Dickinson’s ideas spread quickly through the colonies, often reprinted in newspapers and pamphlets.

VI. The crisis accelerated in 1768.
   A. Imperial officials seized John Hancock’s *Liberty* for suspected smuggling.
      1. Riots broke out on the streets of Boston.
      2. Armed British troops soon arrived in the city.
   B. Many colonists saw in the arrival of the troops a confirmation of their darkest fears of a tyrant using a standing army to deprive people of their liberty.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. In what ways did the debate over representation reflect the issues that had been simmering since the early 1760s?
2. How did the revolts in the hinterland mirror the disputes between the colonies and Britain?
Lecture Fifteen
The Logic of Loyalty and Resistance

Scope: Ever since the accession of George III in 1760, British politics at the highest level had been characterized by dissent and outright disputes. By the late 1760s, the king faced growing dissent at home, notably in the guise of John Wilkes, and abroad. But the situation was not yet bleak. The king still had thousands of loyal supporters in the colonies, including Thomas Hutchinson, a man who would eventually become the focal point of much political agitation in Massachusetts. But despite the presence of men and women who remained loyal, many Anglo-American colonists were busy creating what became a Revolutionary infrastructure on the ground. The resisters knew that their assemblies, though popularly elected, had little chance to eradicate the onerous legislation because any legal efforts they took would be vetoed by governors, who were the representatives of the king and Parliament in the Western Hemisphere. To get their way, they would need to organize extralegal bodies. Known as Committees of Correspondence (and, later, Committees of Safety), these groups of colonists acted well outside the bounds of assemblies and governors. They took it upon themselves to organize resistance to Britain. They posted the names of shopkeepers who violated the non-importation movement and threatened merchants who sold British goods and their customers who wanted to purchase them. As the legal system began to fray in the early 1770s, these committees assumed the roles of local governing bodies. The committees organized those who protested British actions, assuming a structure more formal than the loose-knit mobs that had taken to the streets in 1765.

Outline
I. During the 1760s, British politics became increasingly unstable.
   A. King George III searched for ministers who could maintain control of the system while simultaneously advancing his agenda.
   B. By 1767, the policies of Charles Townshend, chancellor of the exchequer, were in effect.
II. Domestic dissent continued to roil British politics, much of it associated with John Wilkes.
   A. John Wilkes remained a focal point of the opposition to the king.
   B. He was not allowed to take his place in Parliament, despite the fact that he had received the most support in his district (Middlesex) in more than one election.
   C. He eventually held public office (alderman in 1769; sheriff in 1771; lord mayor in 1774), though he continued to run afoul of ruling authorities.
   D. Colonists involved in the protest movement rallied around Wilkes.
III. Despite the problems within Britain, many of the king’s subjects remained loyal to him.
   A. His most famous supporter in the colonies was Thomas Hutchinson, who was in the midst of a political ascendancy that would lead to his appointment as the last royal governor of Massachusetts.
      1. Hutchinson was born in the colonies and, in many ways, represented a model of a successful politician.
      2. Though he disagreed with some of the policies of the king and Parliament, such as the Stamp Act, he remained loyal to George III and the imperial system.
   B. In the shifting political tides of the 1760s and 1770s, Hutchinson and his kind of loyalism became an anachronism.
   C. Even in their protests, colonists remained loyal to the king.
IV. Committees of Correspondence became the infrastructure of the resistance movement.
   A. The committees were extralegal gatherings of individuals.
      1. No rules guided the workings of the Committees of Correspondence.
      2. With information flowing freely in the colonies, members of committees learned about others’ experiences and tried to apply them in their own localities.
3. In Virginia, the Committee of Correspondence organized in March 1773, consisted of 11 people including Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, and Richard Henry Lee.

B. Over time, the committees took on the functions of governing bodies.
   1. Even without formal charters, the committees took it upon themselves to enforce such resistance measures as non-importation.
   2. In many instances, the committees also became de facto courts, meting out justice to miscreants in disputes that had nothing to do with the resistance.

V. Committees’ actions propelled the resistance movement forward.
   A. Creation of committees demonstrated that the resistance movement had moved far beyond its Massachusetts origins.
      1. Their operations testified to the spread of the resistance movement.
      2. Through their actions, the committees spread the ideas of the Revolution.
   B. Committees spread far into the hinterland, into areas where there had been no obvious trouble with British authorities or soldiers.

VI. By the early 1770s, two distinct political trajectories had appeared in the colonies.
   A. On the one hand, many colonists continued to express their loyalty for the King.
      1. Their petitions to him emphasized that they were protesting specific acts that they believed violated their rights as freeborn Englishmen.
      2. They did not seek to break away from his rule or to sever ties with Britain.
   B. On the other hand, the festering rebellion continued to move forward, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.
      1. The crisis over Wilkes’ disputed non-election spread discontent in Britain, and led eventually to Wilkes becoming a symbolic figure to American resisters and colonists sending him support.
      2. The kinds of self-government evident in the hinterland—in movements like those of the Paxton Boys, the Carolina Regulators, the followers of Ethan Allen—now became more common.

Essential Reading:
David Ammerman, *In the Common Cause*.
Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*.

Supplementary Reading:
Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America*.
Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775–1783*.

Questions to Consider:
1. How did the flow of information in the colonies facilitate the actions of the Committees of Correspondence and Safety?
2. What was the relationship between participation in acts of defiance and the creative process of taking control of local affairs?
Lecture Sixteen
Franklin and the Search for Reconciliation

Scope: By the 1750s, Benjamin Franklin had already become an international celebrity. He had risen from relative obscurity thanks not to family connections but to his intellectual gifts, which he turned in a dazzling variety of directions, especially in his adopted hometown of Philadelphia. He organized the first lending library in the colonies, as well as the first fire company; played a prominent role in the founding of the College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania) and the American Philosophical Society; and invented such useful products as bifocals and a stove that bore his name, which effectively channeled smoke out of the inside of a house. But he also played a central role in the politics of the looming crisis. He went to London in 1757 to press Pennsylvania’s claims and, in time, became the agent for Massachusetts, Georgia, and New Jersey. In London, where he spent far more time than in the colonies, he developed extensive connections with politicians and intellectuals. Those connections convinced him that the colonists’ interests were best served by negotiating with Parliament and the king. In his mind, the issues fueling the colonists’ protests could be redressed if British authorities would respond to their complaints. In this sense, his view of politics reflected colonial practice, in which legislators listened to the petitions of their constituents. As the new decade dawned, he believed that the troubling problems could be solved because it was, as he wrote in his many letters, in the interests of both the British and the colonists to retain their political ties and united political system.

Outline

I. Benjamin Franklin had emerged by the time of the Revolution as the most important resident of Philadelphia, the largest city in the mainland colonies.
   A. Franklin was already a public figure with a reputation for acting in the best interest of the people.
   B. Under his direction, Philadelphia became the home of the first free library in the colonies, as well as the first urban fire corps.
   C. His newspaper, the Pennsylvania Gazette, was among the most influential in the colonies.
   D. He was an inventor, too, who could list a stove named for him (the Franklin stove) and bifocals among his accomplishments.
   E. His experiments with electricity brought him international renown.
      1. He published the first part of his Experiments and Observations on Electricity in London in 1751, with the second and third parts published in 1753 and 1754.
      2. His description of the way lightning works brought more accolades.

II. By mid-century, Franklin began to become involved in provincial political affairs.
   A. He was elected to the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1751.
   B. He used his wit to counter the possibility that Britain was soon to allow the transportation of convicts to the colonies.
      1. Convicts had been among the English emigrants to the colonies in the 17th century but not in very large numbers.
      2. The expansion of the number of capital crimes in Britain led to an increase in the number of individuals offered transportation in lieu of execution.
      3. To protest the plans, Franklin proposed that American colonists send rattlesnakes to London.
   C. He became deputy postmaster general of North America in 1753, the same year he received honorary degrees from Harvard and Yale.
   D. In 1755, he published “Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind.”
      1. He recognized that the colonial population was doubling approximately each generation.
      2. As a result of that demographic change, Franklin believed that the Anglo-American colonies would eventually become the dominant part of the British Empire.
      3. Under those circumstances, it was crucial that the any political tensions between Britain and the colonies be minimized.
III. Franklin recognized that true political authority could come only from close contact with governing officials in London.
   A. In 1757, he moved to London, leaving his family behind in Pennsylvania.
   B. Working as an agent for Pennsylvania and then other colonies, he learned how to exert political influence abroad.

IV. In London, Franklin worked tirelessly to mend the rift between colonists, on the one hand, and the Crown and Parliament, on the other.
   A. He believed that existing tensions arose from the inability of the British to recognize the importance of the colonies for the empire.
      1. Franklin hoped that his personal connections would assist his political cause.
      2. His faith in Parliament and the king caused some colonists to doubt his motives.
   B. Franklin distrusted Hillsborough, the British imperial figure who became crucial in the governance of the colonies in the 1770s.
   C. While in London, Franklin’s relations with Thomas Hutchinson deteriorated.
      1. Franklin obtained a series of private letters written by Hutchinson in the late 1760s and sent them to Boston with instructions that they not be published.
      2. When the letters were published despite Franklin’s wish, they inflamed passions in the colony and made Hutchinson evermore suspicious about Franklin.
   D. Blamed for a crisis he had been trying to avert, Franklin became committed to the cause of resistance.

Essential Reading:
Edmund S. Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*.

Supplementary Reading:
Esmond Wright, *Franklin of Philadelphia*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What does Franklin’s hesitancy reflect about the nature of the political struggle in the late 1760s and early 1770s?
2. What was the relationship between personal prestige and political authority in the Anglo-American world?
Lecture Seventeen
The Boston Massacre

Scope: On March 5, 1770, colonists in Boston and British troops stationed there since the time of the Townshend duties confronted each other. As tensions mounted, the British believed they were under attack. In response, they fired into the crowd, killing five colonists. The action immediately became the symbol of British aggression, especially when Paul Revere’s engraving of the event spread quickly in provincial newspapers, becoming the most effective case of visual propaganda yet generated in the colonies. Revere depicted the British in formation shooting into a crowd in which no one else was armed, thereby simplifying—and distorting—a far more complex scene. The soldiers involved in the incident were soon brought up on charges and defended by John Adams and Josiah Quincy, who managed to get them acquitted. But even cleared of the formal charges, the soldiers nonetheless became the ultimate symbol of the corruption of the British political system. To colonists, the willingness of the soldiers to shoot into the crowd proved that the British no longer cared about winning disputes through words and policies; instead, like Turkish janissaries who haunted colonists’ nightmares of living under a tyrant, the British would implement their actions through force alone. Though the British tried to ameliorate the situation by repealing the Townshend Acts (except for the duty on tea) and allowing the 1768 Quartering Act to expire, the political system had suffered a severe blow.

Outline

I. On March 5, 1770, British troops fired into a crowd in Boston, killing five men.
   A. The crowd had gathered to protest the continued presence of troops in Boston.
      1. The troops, who now numbered 4,000 in the city of 15,000, had been a visible presence of British authority since they first started to arrive in 1768.
      2. The colonists viewed them as a standing army, an entity they feared.
   B. The act immediately sent shock waves through the colonies.
      1. Paul Revere’s engraving of the scene inflamed passions.
      2. News spread quickly, and Revere’s picture was reprinted frequently.

II. The Boston Massacre and its aftermath signaled a decisive change in the nature of the resistance movement.
   A. Colonists’ fears about standing armies had now become realized.
      1. In a trial that followed, John Adams defended the British soldiers, despite the fact that his sympathies lay with the resistance.
      2. The deaths became touchstones for the Revolutionaries.
   B. The events in Boston, as understood by colonists, signaled that there were no limits to the British willingness to suppress colonial dissent.

III. During the trial, the British soldiers were represented by John Adams and Josiah Quincy.
   A. Though committed to the resistance movement, Adams in particular believed it was crucial that the defendants receive a fair trial.
   B. The acquittals signaled that the acts of that March day, though horrendous, did not violate British law as it was understood in the colonies.

IV. Almost immediately, the actions of the troops in Boston came to be seen as proof of the rebels’ claims that the king would use military force to suppress legitimate acts of dissent.
   A. Paul Revere’s engraving of the scene confirmed the sense that the event was a one-sided “massacre.”
      1. His broadside became the most effective piece of propaganda in the period before war broke out in 1775.
2. The image spread widely in the colonies and, thus, suggested the power of visual images to propel the resistance movement forward.

3. Other images also circulated, including a chilling broadside with five coffins on it, symbolizing the passing of those killed in Boston.

B. Such propaganda confirmed rebels’ predictions that a tyrant would use military forces during times of peace to advance his nefarious agenda.
   1. Such forces were known as *standing armies*, to differentiate them from the legitimate armies mustered during wartime.
   2. Resistance propaganda likened such standing armies to the private janissary troops that colonists imagined served at the pleasure of Turkish despots.

C. To allay the crisis, the British tried to respond to the colonists’ concerns by repealing most of the Townshend duties.

V. The Boston Massacre became a rallying point for the resistance movement.
   A. Each year, people in Boston listened to orations about what it meant.
   B. The oration given on March 5, 1772, by Joseph Warren saw the event in specific ideological terms.
      1. Warren spoke at length about the nature of constitutions, specifically, the British Constitution.
      2. Like others in the resistance movement, he used history to explain current-day events.
   C. Four years after the event, John Hancock offered on March 5, 1774, yet another denunciation of specific injustices, again warning against a tyrant who uses a standing army against an otherwise free people.

**Essential Reading:**
Hiller Zobel, *The Boston Massacre*.

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. What role did propaganda play in the spread of the resistance?
2. Were the colonists’ fears about standing armies fair given the fact that the incident in Boston led to no criminal convictions?
Lecture Eighteen
The British Empire and the Tea Act

Scope: In the aftermath of the Boston Massacre, the British found it increasingly difficult to manage their American possessions, but some held out the hope that the tensions might ease. Many colonists, however, no longer shared such faith. To them, any notion of trust that had existed even through the tumultuous protests of the 1760s had disappeared when the smoke rose in Boston on that early spring morning. Now, every effort of the British to raise revenue, or even to maintain order, became more difficult, especially in Massachusetts. Soldiers had been stationed in and around Boston since 1768, and they had become the objects of derision by locals by 1770. When a British customs ship called the Gaspee ran aground in Narragansett Bay, residents of Rhode Island rode out to it, brought the crew ashore, then set the ship on fire. The action enraged the English, who promised a reward to anyone who would turn in the malefactors; the British planned to take them to England for trial. Soon after, the British passed the Tea Act, an effort to raise revenue for the struggling East India Company. The act dictated that tea would be under the charge of consignees, who would be responsible for selling it. Members of Hutchinson’s family were among those to receive the lucrative contracts for Massachusetts. The actions seemed yet further confirmation to the rebels that the British had made the colonists second-class subjects of the king, denizens of his realm destined not to enjoy the rights possessed by other freeborn Englishmen.

Outline

I. From 1770 to 1772, it seemed possible that the tensions would finally disappear.
   A. The British organized a new administration, with immediate effects for colonists.
      1. Among the actions of the administration of Lord North was the repeal of the Townshend duties, which had never generated as much revenue as the British had needed.
      2. The British retained the duty on tea.
   B. In 1772, the British schooner Gaspee ran aground off Providence, Rhode Island.
      1. Local colonists rowed out to the ship, sent the crew to shore, and burned the ship.
      2. Their actions, a protest against the continued enforcement of the Navigation Acts, enraged the British, who wanted those responsible sent to Britain to be tried.

II. Colonists in Virginia and Massachusetts responded directly to the threat of the British trying those involved in the incident in England.
   A. Committees of Correspondence aimed to convince colonists that the British had no respect for colonial courts.
   B. Many colonists believed that the king was unaware of the actions of his government; thus, they aimed their hostility at other parts of the imperial administration.

III. The Tea Act of 1773 further enflamed passions in the mainland colonies.
   A. The ministry designed the act to provide economic support for the British East India Company, which was then struggling in South Asia.
   B. The act specified agents who would be responsible for the sale of tea.
   C. Among those who received contracts in Boston were the son and son-in-law of Thomas Hutchinson.
   D. Such an obvious act of political favoritism seemed to the rebels proof of the cupidty of the provincial administration.

IV. Colonists immediately protested the Tea Act.
   A. The first resolution against it appeared in Philadelphia in October 1773.
      1. The resolution, which appeared in the Pennsylvania Gazette, denied the legitimacy of Parliament to pass an act without the colonists’ approval.
      2. The resolution called on Americans to oppose the act.
      3. It specified that anyone assigned to sell tea was “an enemy to this country.”
B. Philadelphia protesters threatened the captains of British ships with physical violence if they brought their tea to port.

C. Protesters at a public meeting in New York in December similarly threatened violence against anyone who brought tea to the city.
   1. Like the Philadelphia protesters, their counterparts in New York saw the act as an effort to tax Americans without their consent.
   2. The resolution they produced defined anyone who imported, sold, or even purchased tea while the act was in effect as “an enemy to the liberties of America.”

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why was the British plan to try those who burned the *Gaspee* in Britain so important to colonists?
2. What role did the publication of Massachusetts committees’ views play in the looming crisis?
Lecture Nineteen
The Boston Tea Party and the Coercive Acts

Scope: On November 30, 1773, the Dartmouth, loaded with tea, docked in Boston Harbor. On December 13, a crowd estimated at 8,000 arrived at the docks and watched as a group of men, dressed improbably as Native Americans, boarded the ship and dumped 342 barrels of tea into the harbor. As with the massacre three years earlier, news of the event spread quickly in the colonies. When word of what happened reached London, the British responded as never before. Parliament quickly passed a series of acts intended to punish the people of Boston. The Boston Port Bill closed the harbor, the economic lifeline of the city, until the residents paid for taxes on the tea dumped into the harbor. The Massachusetts Government Act suspended the general court (the locally elected assembly) and vested all power in the hands of the royal governor and the Crown. The Administration of Justice Act protected judicial officials from being sued for upholding the laws. The Quebec Act redefined the boundaries of a province taken from France as a result of the treaty of 1763, an action that particularly enraged the residents of Massachusetts, who lost some of their territory and feared growing British acceptance of the region’s Catholic residents. The Quartering Act reinstated the policy of housing British troops in colonists’ property. In the highly charged political arena, pamphleteers and newspaper editors informed their readers that the rebels’ deepest fears had been realized in Boston.

Outline

I. The passage of the Tea Act had an immediate and permanent effect on the resistance movement.
   A. The act was Parliament’s effort to raise funds for the struggling East India Company.
      1. The act granted a monopoly on the sale of tea to the company.
      2. The company then granted contracts to subsidiaries, which had monopoly rights to sell tea in British settlements.
   B. Many colonists saw the Tea Act and its provisions as a sign of the corruption of the British system.
      1. The act represented what seemed another effort to support cronies in the name of economic development.
      2. Many at a public meeting in Boston tried to order ships carrying tea to leave port with their cargoes still on board.

II. On December 16, 1773, a crowd of men dressed as Native Americans dumped tea worth £10,000 into Boston Harbor.
   A. The act culminated a standoff in the port that had begun three weeks earlier, when British ships had arrived loaded with tea.
      1. The Boston crowd had defied imperial authorities during the standoff.
      2. Known as the “Tea Party,” the dumping of the ships’ cargo was the most dramatic moment in the resistance movement.
      3. Witnesses, including John Adams, knew that the action would have far-reaching effects.
   B. It is likely that those who dumped the tea dressed as Native Americans to invoke the iconographic tradition of Indians representing “America” to Europeans.

III. In response to the Boston Tea Party, Parliament set out to punish the perpetrators.
   A. The British passed a series of bills designed to stop any further acts of resistance.
      1. The Boston Port Bill closed the port until colonists paid for the dumped tea.
      2. The Massachusetts Government Act suspended the locally assembled government.
      3. The Administration of Justice Act provided legal protections for British officials implementing Parliament’s acts.
      4. The Quartering Act gave the provincial governor the ability to seize dwellings to house British soldiers.
   B. Parliament also passed the Quebec Act.

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1. The act gave French Catholic residents of Quebec expanded freedom to govern themselves and practice Catholicism.
2. The French also gained control of lands between the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.

IV. The combination of these acts convinced many colonists that reconciliation was no longer possible.
   A. Unlike previous acts, the Intolerable Acts confirmed colonists’ fears that the British were in the process of depriving them of the rights of freeborn Englishmen.
   B. The Intolerable Acts represented the prevailing British view that the problem was confined to Boston.
      1. The acts were designed to punish criminals and their supporters.
      2. The British misunderstood the American political context and did not realize that the acts would further the resistance.
      3. Colonists believed that the king’s ministers had launched a campaign to deprive them of their rights.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What was the relationship between perceptions of individuals (such as the Hutchinsons) and political acts of resistance?
2. Did the Intolerable Acts represent a reasonable response to the Boston Tea Party?
3. How did the colonists’ interpretation of the acts fit their larger view of the nature of politics and, specifically, their belief that history revealed repeated struggles between the forces of power and those of liberty?
Lecture Twenty

The First Continental Congress

Scope: The British response to the Tea Party convinced many colonists that their darkest predictions about the actions of the king and Parliament had come to pass. The king had failed to respond to the colonists’ earlier petitions, his silence convincing them that he had become embroiled in a conspiracy hatched by his ministers to deprive British Americans of their rights as freeborn Englishmen. Despite the efforts of such diplomats as Franklin, the British had proven that they were willing to punish legitimate acts of dissent. That, at least, is what the rebels’ propaganda declared. According to reports emanating from Boston and picked up by newspapers and pamphleteers across the Anglo-American colonies, what happened in Massachusetts was a sign of what the British had in mind for each of the colonies. Once word spread, colonists began to meet outside the bounds of the colonial legislatures, forming extralegal bodies. Soon, 12 of the 13 colonies chose representatives who traveled to Philadelphia and convened the First Continental Congress. The organized protests stretched along the length of the Atlantic coast and touched on a wide range of issues crucial to the way colonists’ understood the world around them.

Outline

I. The Intolerable Acts created a political crisis for the Anglo-American colonists.
   A. When reports of the British actions spread, so did sentiment for Bostonians.
      1. Colonists up and down the East Coast read reports about what had happened in Boston.
      2. Their discussions focused on British abuses of power and signs of incipient tyranny.
   B. Across the colonies, committees met to discuss the crisis and how to respond to it.
      1. Many colonists came to believe that the king ignored them and, as a result, had become implicated in the plot to deprive them of their liberties.
      2. In September, representatives of committees from 12 colonies met in Philadelphia and organized resistance to British actions.

II. The Continental Congress brought together some of the most prominent members of the resistance movement.
   A. Samuel Adams, John Adams, Joseph Galloway, Richard Henry Lee, and Patrick Henry argued about how the colonists should respond to the crisis.
      1. They debated Galloway’s proposal for a political union between Britain and the colonies.
      2. The Congress also created the Association, which became the agency responsible for expanding non-importation into non-exportation, as well.
   B. Despite the sense of urgency, the Congress did not support any move toward independence.

III. The calling of Congress brought to the fore a new discussion about the limits of Parliamentary authority in the mainland colonies.
   A. Conservatives, such as Joseph Galloway, decried the tactics of those whom they believed pushed too far in the direction of independence.
      1. Galloway himself chastised those who had, since 1765, used “every fiction, falsehood, and fraud to delude the people from their due allegiance” to Britain.
      2. He accused his political opponents of threatening violence to advance their cause.
   B. In September 1774, Congress debated the nature of the rights possessed by Americans.
      1. Notes left by John Adams and others reveal that those in attendance spoke openly about the British Constitution and what it meant in these circumstances.
      2. They recounted their own history and their belief that they possessed rights that no government could trample.

IV. In October 1774, the members of the Continental Congress outlined their understanding of the crisis and what it meant for their liberty.
   A. Such resolves did not constitute a declaration of independence, though the language anticipated that later document.
B. With this declaration, the Congress attempted to lay out the situation as its members understood it.
   1. They summarized recent actions by Parliament that were threatening.
   2. They paid particular attention to the Intolerable Acts.

C. They declared a series of rights held by colonists, including the right to “life, liberty and property.”
   1. The resolution explained that Anglo-Americans possessed these rights because their ancestors had them when they arrived in the Western Hemisphere.
   2. Congress repeated the fact that colonists could not participate in Parliament and, therefore, could not give their consent to that body’s actions.

V. The declaration reflected the delegates’ understanding of politics in the Anglo-American world.
   A. They asserted their belief in the freedom to assemble peacefully and to petition the king.
   B. They warned again about the dangers of standing armies.
   C. They saw constitutional problems in the fact that American legislatures were under the authority of the king’s agents.

VI. Congress authorized the Association on October 20, 1774, in an effort to alter colonists’ economic practices and to bring even greater pressure on Britain.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why didn’t Congress move directly toward independence in 1774?
2. What explains the nature of Congress’s response, specifically its decision to focus on economic pressure?
Lecture Twenty-One
Lexington and Concord

Scope: By the spring of 1775, rebels in Massachusetts had stored arms in Lexington in preparation for military action against the British. On April 18, Governor Thomas Gage ordered 700 troops to muster on Boston Common, and he then sent them toward the arsenal. Paul Revere and William Dawes, under orders from the city’s Committee of Safety, rode into the countryside to warn of the incoming soldiers. On the morning of April 19, the soldiers confronted a hastily assembled group of Minutemen, who had hoped that by meeting the soldiers head on, the British would retreat to Boston. Rather than retreat, the soldiers responded to a mysterious shot by opening fire on the shocked colonists. Soon after, the British marched to Concord, but they were met by other Minutemen, who shot at them. The troops decided to retreat to Boston, but along the way, militia members shot at them from behind trees and stone walls. By the end of the day, 273 soldiers were dead, along with 95 colonists. The “shot heard round the world” on Lexington Green had started one of the most unlikely wars in human history.

Outline

I. By the spring of 1775, tensions between the colonies and Britain had reached a crisis point.
   A. Leaders of the protest movement articulated poignant critiques about the nature of the threats they faced.
   B. Patrick Henry emerged as one of the most effective promoters of the rebels’ cause following his famous speech on March 23, 1773.
   C. Information about British actions circulated in powerful engravings such as *Bostonians in Distress* (1774), as well as detailed newspaper reports and pamphlets.

*Bostonians in Distress* (1774)
Library of Congress
Prints & Photographs Division
LC-USZC4-4600
II. The “shot heard round the world” rang out on Lexington Green on the morning of April 19, 1775.
   A. British soldiers had marched to Lexington because rebels had stored arms there.
      1. The existence of the rebels’ arms supply revealed that the resistance had moved into a new phase.
      2. Governor Thomas Gage ordered 700 troops to muster on Boston Common and then sent them toward Lexington.
   B. As the British marched through the countryside, many colonists knew they were coming because Paul Revere and William Dawes had warned them.
   C. The violence initiated at Lexington spilled over immediately to Concord, where provincial Minutemen met British Redcoats.

III. The clashes on April 19 led to numerous deaths on both sides.
   A. At Lexington, the first colonists since the day of the Boston Massacre died at the hands of British soldiers.
   B. The Minutemen assembled in Concord were able to inflict casualties on the British, thereby suggesting that colonists were willing to face larger armies to defend their interests.
   C. By the time the British had marched back to Boston that evening, 273 of them had been killed, along with 95 colonists.

IV. The lessons of April 19 spread quickly through the colonies.
   A. News of the events at Lexington and Concord passed from mouth to mouth even as the day wore on, then appeared in newspaper accounts.
      1. Those supporting the resistance movement recognized that the violence again confirmed colonists’ fears about the dangers of a standing army in their midst.
      2. News reports emphasized that it was the British who had fired the first shot.
      3. Soon, broadsides appeared telling what had happened during that fateful day.
   B. The British knew that the events of April 19 permanently changed their relations with North American colonists.
      1. As a result of the resistance they encountered, the British recognized that the rebellion had entered a decisive phase.
      2. The British still believed that the rebellion was primarily a local affair that could be defeated by suppressing miscreants.

V. The actions of that day came to define the early moments of the Revolution itself.
   A. The reliance on the militia to confront British soldiers remained a crucial part of the military strategy of the rebels, even after the development of the Continental Army.
   B. Few individuals associated with the war achieved the fame of Paul Revere and the Minutemen.

Essential Reading:
David Hackett Fisher, *Paul Revere's Ride*.
Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Did the British make a miscalculation by marching on Lexington and Concord?
2. What role did skilled propagandists, such as Revere, play in the spread of the rebellion at this point?
Lecture Twenty-Two

Second Continental Congress and Bunker Hill

Scope: In the aftermath of the events of April 19, the rebellion spread quickly. On May 10, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold led a contingent to Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain in upper New York, taking it during a surprise attack. That same day, the Second Continental Congress gathered in Pennsylvania. It began to direct the war effort, most notably by appointing Washington to be commander-in-chief of the resistance forces, replacing Artemas Ward. Other than the battle in New York, both the Congress and the British had their sights set on eastern Massachusetts. On June 17, two months after the first battle at Lexington, the rebels faced off against a far larger and better trained army at Bunker (Breed’s) Hill near Boston. The battle was so close to the city that its residents watched it take place from nearby hills. The British made three charges up the hill during the day, each time suffering large numbers of casualties. Though the British probably had the troops to prevail, General William Howe pulled his soldiers from battle at 5 p.m., thereby allowing the rebels to escape. Howe’s strategy fit prevailing British military ideals, but those ideas soon proved archaic and inappropriate for the American theatre, as Bunker Hill suggested.

Outline

I. In 1775, the Second Continental Congress prepared for war.
   A. Despite the fact that the colonists were still subjects of the king, the members of Congress recognized that the time had come to defend the provinces from the king’s soldiers.
      1. Congress authorized Ethan Allen to take Fort Ticonderoga in upstate New York.
      2. Congress also appointed George Washington to take command of the nascent Continental Army.
   B. On June 17, the Continental and British forces faced off on Breed’s Hill, in the event now known as the Battle of Bunker Hill.
      1. Despite being poorly trained and equipped compared to the British, the Continental forces, who controlled the top of the hill, managed to push back three British uphill thrusts.
      2. At the end of the day, the commander of the British forces, William Howe, ordered his troops to halt their efforts for the day, an action that allowed the Continental soldiers to escape.

II. Howe’s actions fit the prevailing British military culture, which had evolved in Europe and stressed that battles should be fought according to certain well-known rules.
   A. To Howe, military actions in America needed to be restrained so that hostilities did not further erode the possibility that the colonists would one day again accept a role in the British Empire.
   B. He recognized the important support that the rebels were receiving from the local population.

III. The Battle of Bunker Hill had decisive meaning for both the rebels and the British.
   A. Because it was fought on a hill near Boston, many colonists witnessed the action take place from a distance.
   B. They saw firsthand the victory of the out-manned Continental force.
IV. The Battle of Bunker Hill had a quick and decisive effect on the rebellion.  
   A. Among the casualties at Bunker Hill was Joseph Warren, who had been among the most effective spokesmen of the resistance movement.  
      1. In addition to his brilliant commemoration of the Boston Massacre in 1772, he was the prime author of the Suffolk Resolves of September 1774.  
      2. In that document, Warren embraced much of the leading edge of the Revolution’s ideology, including the belief that the king was attempting to enslave American colonists by depriving them of their liberty.  
   B. In the aftermath of the battle, Thomas Jefferson, with assistance from John Dickinson, wrote the “Declaration on Taking up Arms.”  
      1. The document anticipated the Declaration of Independence in its logic.  
      2. Despite the fact that the war had begun, this declaration did not advocate independence.  

Essential Reading:  
Ira Gruber, *The Howe Brothers and the American Revolution*.  

Supplementary Reading:  
Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775–1783*.  

Questions to Consider:  
1. What was the significance of the Continental Army’s performance at Bunker Hill?  
2. How did Howe’s political views alter the course of the resistance movement?
Lecture Twenty-Three

Thomas Paine and *Common Sense*

Scope: In December 1774, Thomas Paine arrived in Philadelphia. Fourteen months later, after the battles at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, he published *Common Sense*. It quickly became the most successful piece of propaganda for the American Revolution. Paine set out to demolish the intellectual supports for inherited power. He lashed out against monarchy in general and the British monarchy in particular. In the process, he provided the ideological structure that rebels would use six months later in Philadelphia. America was to be different, he argued, an asylum for liberty in a corrupt world. Though some rebels, notably John Adams, criticized Paine for what seemed the ludicrous extent of his claims, the pamphlet became the first bona fide bestseller in the colonies, with perhaps 500,000 copies in print by the end of 1776, that is, one copy for every four colonists. *Common Sense* hit a deep chord among Anglo-American colonists, its fiery language quickly applied to what had already grown into a major conflict.

Outline

I. In August and October 1775, King George III issued orders relating to the American crisis.
   A. He used his August address to quell any support for the rebellion within Britain.
   B. He directed his second address to the rebels.
      1. He praised Parliament for the wisdom of the acts of 1774, aimed at suppressing lawlessness.
      2. He told the “unhappy and deluded multitude” of colonists who supported the rebellion that he would welcome them back once they had learned their lesson at the hands of his soldiers.

II. Paine was, in many ways, an unlikely person to play a decisive role in American history.
   A. He was a recent immigrant, having arrived in Philadelphia in December 1774.
      1. He was an unsuccessful British corset-maker, who had also failed in England as a tax collector and a teacher.
      2. While still in London, he met Benjamin Franklin, who provided Paine with contacts in Philadelphia, which proved crucial as he settled into his new home.
      3. Paine quickly became a member of Philadelphia’s chattering class, writing for local newspapers.
   B. Paine embraced the resistance movement.
      1. He arrived five months before shots rang out in Lexington and quickly immersed himself in the rebellion.
      2. By late 1775, he decided to summarize his arguments in a pamphlet entitled *Common Sense*.

III. *Common Sense* became the central text of the resistance movement.
   A. Paine used the pamphlet to express his political views.
      1. He attacked the idea of inherited authority.
      2. He recognized that the American rebels stood poised to make history on a world stage.
      3. He urged independence as the only reasonable response to the tyranny of George III.
   B. *Common Sense* became a publishing sensation, despite the fact that Paine had his critics.
      1. The pamphlet was reprinted numerous times in 1776, with editions emanating from presses across the mainland.
      2. Paine’s critics included loyalists who resented his attack on the king, as well as John Adams, who thought that Paine was capable of recommending the destruction of systems but failed to provide reasonable alternatives.

IV. The enduring power of *Common Sense* derived from the grandiosity of Paine’s language.
   A. Paine spoke in the kind of universal language that would soon be found in the Declaration of Independence.
   B. He saw the resistance to the king and Parliament as part of a world-historical struggle against tyranny.
      1. Paine believed that America could be an “asylum” for liberty.
2. Paine drew directly on his understanding of history, which in his mind represented an effort to find a secure haven against tyrants bent on depriving people of their rights.

C. In the canon of colonial literature, Common Sense surpassed captivity narratives, a perennial favorite since the 17th century, because it spoke to the concerns of the Revolutionary generation.

Essential Reading:
Thomas Paine, Common Sense.
Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What explains the phenomenal and unprecedented success of Common Sense?
2. Why didn’t criticisms such as Adams’s blunt the impact of the pamphlet?
Lecture Twenty-Four
The British Seizure of New York

Scope: When the war began in 1775, the British presumed it was a local crisis that could be solved with the application of overwhelming force directed at miscreants. But after the loss of life during the march back from Lexington and Concord and the debacle at Bunker Hill, the British recognized that this conflict could not be contained so easily. Understanding that the actions of their soldiers had inflamed passions in Massachusetts, the British decided to move their base of operations to New York City, a community that they correctly believed contained many residents loyal to the king. The movement of troops out of Boston was greeted with delight by the city’s inhabitants. But any pleasure was short-lived. In addition to the relocation of the main British effort, London also sent additional soldiers to North America, raising the level of troops beyond the number of those who had been stationed there during the Seven Years’ War. The addition of troops and the new location also signaled a shift in British strategies. Far more experienced in traditional European-style theatres, the British anticipated that the changes of 1776 would enable them to confront Washington’s still-fledgling Continental Army in more advantageous conditions.

Outline

I. The debacle at Bunker Hill convinced the British that they had to move to friendlier confines.
   A. The people of Boston and Massachusetts overwhelmingly supported the resistance and provided support for it.
      1. Tensions between British soldiers and Massachusetts residents had not decreased since the time of the Boston Massacre.
      2. The British recognized that the resistance movement and the Continental Army gained support from locals.
   B. Local newspapers printed stories of depredations caused by British soldiers in Boston.

II. The British moved their base of operations from Boston to New York.
   A. The move signaled the fact that the resistance movement had gained strength, even though the colonists were still subjects of the king.
      1. The British believed that they would be treated more fairly in New York and would be able to launch more effective military campaigns if they were based there.
      2. Howe immediately asserted his authority through his treatment of Nathan Hale.
      3. The British hoped they would have better access to supplies in New York.
      4. The move allowed the British to gain control of the Hudson River, which they knew would be crucial if they wanted to contain the rebellion in New England.
   B. The British effort was hampered by a fire in New York that destroyed about one-fourth of the city’s buildings.
      1. Rumors abounded that George Washington was responsible for the calamity.
      2. He admitted it would have been a good idea, but he did not order the fire.
   C. New York became a scene of squalor and poverty for many who remained there.

III. The relocation of the British had immediate political consequences across the mainland colonies.
   A. Massachusetts, previously an example of a target for British imperious violence, now became a symbol of resistance to unjust authority.
   B. The events at Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, combined with the relocation of the British to New York, made it difficult for colonists who still wanted to be neutral.

IV. The move also shifted the nature of the political debate in Britain.
   A. The remaining opposition in Parliament, which had lingered as events spiraled downward, now became even less significant.
   B. Colonists’ resistance had angered members of Parliament who believed it was crucial for Anglo-Americans to share the financial burdens of the empire.
C. By 1776, the continued resistance came to be seen as a challenge to the legitimacy not of Parliament’s actions but of the institution itself.

D. As a result of that calculation, members of Parliament, like military officials, could no longer believe that the struggle was localized but, instead, was a wider movement, which would require more sustained military actions to suppress.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What political benefits did the rebels reap as a result of the British decision to evacuate from Boston?
2. What did the greeting the British received in New York reveal about the nature of the resistance movement in the early months of 1776?
Timeline

October 25, 1760.............................Death of King George II and accession of King George III.

February 1761 .............................The Writs of Assistance case is argued in Boston.

February 10, 1763 .........................The Peace of Paris is signed, bringing to an end the Seven Years’ War and greatly expanding British territory in North America.

October 7, 1763.............................The English establish the Proclamation Line, which attempts to stop all colonial migration west of the crest of the Appalachian Mountains.

December 13, 1763 .........................The Paxton Boys, a backwoods group of vigilantes, slaughter peaceful Conestoga Indians in Lancaster and march on Philadelphia, where they are turned back two weeks later.

April 5, 1764 .............................Parliament passes the Sugar Act, which lowers taxes on imported molasses in an effort to discourage smuggling.

April 19, 1764 .............................Parliament authorizes the Currency Act, which limits the use of paper money in the North American colonies.

June 13, 1764 .............................The Massachusetts general court establishes the colonies’ first Committee of Correspondence to organize protest against British government actions.

August 1764 .............................Boston merchants organize the first non-importation effort in protest of the Sugar Act.

March 22, 1765 .............................Parliament passes the Stamp Act, scheduled to go into operation on November 1.

Spring 1765 ..................................Upon hearing news of the Stamp Act, colonists begin to protest; James Otis, John Adams, and Patrick Henry each make public statements against the act; colonists form groups known as the Sons of Liberty.

August 14, 1765 .............................Sons of Liberty in Boston hang an effigy of the stamp collector (Andrew Oliver) from a tree; he resigns the next day.

August 26, 1765 .............................Sons of Liberty trash and burn the house of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson.

March 18, 1766 .............................Parliament repeals the Stamp Act and passes the Declaratory Bill.

June 29, 1767 .............................Parliament authorizes the Townshend Acts and creates the American Board of Customs Commissioners, to be housed in Boston, where British customs officials (who arrived in November) would be based.


January 20, 1768 ..........................Lord Hillsborough becomes the secretary of state for the North American colonies, the first time the British have tried to organize the administration of American affairs in a single office.

March 1768 .............................Parliament creates four vice-admiralty courts, to be based in Halifax, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston.

June 10, 1768 .............................British officials seize John Hancock’s Liberty. Bostonians soon riot in protest, prompting British troops to be ordered to the city; they arrive on October 1.

August 1, 1769 .............................Thomas Hutchinson becomes governor of Massachusetts.

December 1769 .............................The British, with Lord North as prime minister, decide to repeal all the Townshend duties except for the duty on tea.

March 5, 1770 .............................The Boston Massacre leads to five deaths; Paul Revere’s engraving of the act becomes the most effective form of propaganda to date for the resistance to British
acts. In early December, six soldiers are acquitted in a Boston court and two others are convicted of manslaughter.

September 1771 .................. In response to a request from Samuel Adams, the Town Meeting in Boston establishes Committees of Correspondence.

June 10, 1772 ...................... The British Gaspee runs aground off Providence; locals row the crew to shore, then burn the ship.

March 2, 1773 ...................... Virginians create a committee of correspondence in response to the Gaspee incident in Rhode Island.

May 10, 1773 ...................... Parliament authorizes the Tea Act in an effort to boost the fortunes of the East India Company; provisions of the act specify that tea contracts would be awarded to consignees, at least some of whom are political favorites.

December 16, 1773 .......... Sons of Liberty in Boston, dressed as Native Americans, dump 90,000 pounds of tea into Boston Harbor, in what becomes known as the “Boston Tea Party.”

January–June 1774 .......... Parliament passes the Coercive or Intolerable Acts to punish the people of Boston and Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party: The Boston Port Act (March 31) closes the port; the Massachusetts Government Act (May 20) reorganizes the administration of the colony; the Administration of Justice Act (May 20) authorizes trials for colonists to take place outside the province; the Quartering Act (June 2) allows British soldiers to seize unoccupied buildings in Massachusetts; the Quebec Act (June 22) threatens Protestants in New England by enabling the government of Quebec to have control of western lands.

June 17, 1774 ...................... Even before news of the final acts has reached Massachusetts, colonists in Boston put out a call for a congress to meet to address the crisis.

September 5, 1774 ............ The First Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia and, in October, establishes the Association to enforce non-importation of British goods.

October 7, 1774 ................. John Hancock becomes the head of the provincial Committee of Safety.

April 18, 1775 ................. Paul Revere and William Dawes ride into the countryside to warn of the British advance on Lexington.

April 19, 1775 ................. Revolutionary War begins with shots fired at Lexington and Concord.

May 10, 1775 ................. The Second Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia; that same day, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold take Fort Ticonderoga.

June 17, 1775 ................. Battle of Bunker Hill.

July 6, 1775 .................. Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms.

January 1776 ................. Tom Paine publishes Common Sense; it becomes an immediate sensation.

March 17, 1776 ................. The British evacuate Boston and head toward New York; 10,000 troops take Staten Island on July 2.

May 10, 1776 .................. Congress authorizes states to establish new forms of government.

July 4, 1776 .................. Members of Congress sign the Declaration of Independence.

August 27, 1776 ................. The British defeat the Continental Army at Long Island; under the command of William Howe, the British subsequently take New York and New Jersey and defeat the Continental Army again, on October 28, at White Plains.

September 21, 1776 .......... A fire destroys about one-fourth of the buildings in New York City.

December 26, 1776 .......... Washington crosses the Delaware, capturing 1,000 British soldiers at Trenton.

January 3, 1777 .......... Washington launches a raid on Princeton, driving the British back to New York.
July–October 1777 Howe leads a British campaign up the Chesapeake toward Philadelphia, which he occupies after defeating the Continental Army at Brandywine (on September 11) and Germantown (on October 4).

October 17, 1777 Burgoyne surrenders to Gates at Saratoga, signaling the end of the British campaign in the North.

December 1777 Washington and his troops establish their winter camp at Valley Forge.

February 6, 1778 France signs the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, supporting the Americans against the British; Spain subsequently enters the war as an ally of France. The British reorganize their military campaign and direct their energies toward the South.

March to June 1780 At least 188 Massachusetts towns respond to request to ratify the state constitution; the constitution becomes law at the end of October. The ratification process becomes a model for subsequent state constitutions.

February 27, 1781 The Articles of Confederation become the official form of government once Maryland agrees, the last state to do so.

October 18, 1781 Cornwallis, unable to escape the siege of Yorktown, surrenders, effectively ending the British military effort in North America, though troops remain until 1783.

April 12, 1782 Negotiations to end the conflict begin in Paris.

September 3, 1783 Treaty ends the Revolutionary War.

November 25, 1783 The last British forces leave New York.

December 23, 1783 Washington goes to Congress, meeting in Annapolis, and resigns his commission.


August 1786 Shays’ Rebellion breaks out in western Massachusetts.

September 1786 Delegates from the states who had traveled to Annapolis to revise the Articles of Confederation decide they will meet the following year in Philadelphia to continue the effort.

January 1787 Shays’ Rebellion continues with an attack on the Springfield federal arsenal.

May 25, 1787 The meeting, which becomes the Constitutional Convention, opens in Philadelphia; on September 17, it ends, submitting the U.S. Constitution to the states for ratification.

July 13, 1787 Northwest Ordinance enacted by the Continental Congress.

December 1787 Delaware (December 7), Pennsylvania (December 12), and New Jersey (December 18) ratify the Constitution.

January–July 1788 Georgia (January 9), Massachusetts (February 6), Maryland (April 28), South Carolina (May 23), New Hampshire (June 21), Virginia (June 25), and New York (July 26) ratify the Constitution.

April 1789 The Electoral College chooses George Washington as president and John Adams as vice president.

September 1789 Congress passes the Judiciary Act, establishing the federal court system.

May 29, 1790 Rhode Island is the last state to ratify the Constitution.

December 15, 1791 Three-quarters of the states ratified the first 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights, to the Constitution.

1793 Supreme Court decides Chisholm v. Georgia.
March 4, 1797 .................................John Adams becomes the second president of the United States and delivers his inaugural address.

1798.................................................Adams’s administration supports the Alien and Sedition Acts, which are opposed by Jefferson and Madison.

March 4, 1801 .................................Thomas Jefferson delivers his inaugural address seeking harmony between Republicans and Federalists.
Glossary

abolition: The movement to eradicate the slavery of African-Americans.

Albany Plan: A proposal made by Benjamin Franklin in 1754 that would unite the 13 colonies but allow them to remain part of the British Empire.

amendment: An addition to a constitution that, once adopted, has the same authority as any other part of that constitution.

antifederalists: Individuals opposed to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Articles of Confederation: The first national government of the United States.

bicameral: A legislative body with two distinct parts or branches.

Bill of Rights, state: The enumeration, in different forms, of certain rights defined at the state level as needing protection from governmental intrusion.

Bill of Rights, U.S.: The first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

broadside: A single sheet of printed paper, often posted in a public place.

checks and balances: The term used to describe the internal series of checks within the federal system of government established by the U.S. Constitution.

colonial agent: An individual living outside of the colony working for the colony’s interest; before and during the era of the Revolution, colonial agents working in London tried to minimize or deter any legislation that might threaten the well-being of the colony.

colonist: An individual inhabiting territory possessed by a nation and (in normal times) pledging obedience to the ruler of that nation.

Committees of Correspondence and Safety: Extralegal groups within the colonies that took it upon themselves to organize the resistance movement and, at times, to take over the actions of governing bodies.

Constitution, British: The sum total of the acts of the king and Parliament and the powers animating them. Sometimes called the “unwritten constitution,” because it cannot be found in a single place.

constitution, state: The fundamental laws of the separate states, authorized by an act of the Second Continental Congress on May 10, 1776. These documents represented efforts by each state to describe the organization of its government and typically included bills of rights.

Constitution, U.S.: Drafted in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787 and ratified by nine states by 1789, this is the “supreme law of the land” in the United States.

Declaration of Independence: The document signed by representatives of the 13 British mainland colonies south of Canada, expressing their belief in the right to govern themselves and enumerating the crimes of King George III, who is defined in the document as a tyrant.

factions: The term used to refer to a specific group of individuals motivated toward political action for their own ends. The term figured prominently in the debate about the U.S. Constitution and became one of the primary subjects of Federalist No. 10, written by James Madison.


Federalist Party: the group of individuals who coalesced around George Washington and John Adams in the 1790s; they supported a powerful federal government and such policies as the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

federalists: Individuals who supported the ratification of the United States Constitution after the Philadelphia convention of 1787.

House of Commons: The branch of the British Parliament that represented the people and contributed, according to 18th-century political theory, “virtue” to the governing system. Members of the House of Commons were elected.
House of Lords: The upper house of Parliament, which represented the landed aristocracy and contributed, according to 18th-century political theory, “wisdom” to the governing system. Members of the House of Lords were appointed, and many inherited their seats.

House of Representatives, U.S.: The lower house of the federal government, in which individuals are elected for two-year terms.

judicial review: The idea, finally established in the United States with the decision of Marbury v. Madison of 1803, that courts had the authority to rule on constitutional questions.

Judiciary Act of 1789: Congressional action, taken according to provisions in the U.S. Constitution, establishing the federal court system.

Loyalist: An individual who remained loyal to the king of England during (and, for many, after) the American Revolution.

Magna Carta: An act of 1215 binding the king of England into a system of laws, with subjects guaranteed certain liberties.

manumission: The act of freeing a slave.

Navigation Acts: Parliamentary legislation to regulate and tax the movement of goods within the British Empire, including the shipment of goods from the mainland North American colonies to ports in the Caribbean and Europe.

pacification: The term used to summarize the British military approach to the Revolutionary War, especially in the South, where the British hoped to quell the resistance movement.

pamphlet: A quickly produced and normally inexpensive short book; often used, as during the American Revolution, to express political ideas and arguments.

Parliament: The term for the House of Commons and the House of Lords, which together, along with the king, rule Britain and its overseas possessions.

party: A collection of individuals who seek political advantage by working together. Parties were in their formative stage during the 1790s.

petition: The document produced by individuals, in this era typically colonists, and sent to representatives with the expectation that those with political authority will be responsive to the will of the people as expressed in the petition.

philosophe: A French individual associated with the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment; philosophes were particularly prominent during the 18th century.

Republican mother: The ideological position of a free woman after the Revolution, who was to maintain a virtuous household so that her husband and sons would possess the virtue necessary to sustain the fledgling republic.

Senate, U.S.: The upper house of the federal government, in which individuals serve six-year terms.

Sons of Liberty: The first and most prominent extralegal assemblage of colonists, who worked together to overturn (through reason or intimidation) acts of Parliament they believed were dangerous to their liberty.

standing army: An army in peacetime, often seen as dangerous by those who feared the power of the state.

statute: An act of a legislative body, which by definition, could be overturned by a subsequent legislative body possessing the same powers as the group that authorized it.

tyrant: A ruler who acted despotically and denied his subjects their rights.

unicameral: A governing system with only one legislative branch.

veto: The ability of an executive to vacate a legislative act.

writ of assistance: A generalized form of search warrant, allowing British officials to look for contraband wherever they suspected it might be found. Such writs needed to be reauthorized within six months of the death of a monarch.
Biographical Notes

Adams, Abigail (1744–1818). Primarily known as the wife of John Adams, Abigail Adams was among the most articulate letter writers of the Revolutionary age. Her letters to her husband spoke directly to the issues of gender-based inequality that continued to exist at the time of the Revolution. She believed that the best time to alter historic discrimination toward women was during this period of political ferment, letting her husband know that all men would act as tyrants to their spouses if they had the opportunity. She did not explicitly seek full political rights for women, but she did seek increased educational opportunities.

Adams, John (1735–1826). Trained as a lawyer, Adams played a central role in the resistance movement from its earliest years in Massachusetts. Despite his sympathy for the incipient rebellion, he defended the British soldiers accused of perpetrating the Boston Massacre. He served in the First and Second Continental Congress, was an outspoken advocate for independence from Britain, and became a diplomat abroad during the Revolutionary War; he was also a principal author of the Massachusetts state constitution. Adams served as Washington’s vice president before becoming president in 1796. His administration authorized the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798, but those statutes became unenforceable with the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800. He died on July 4, 1826, the same day as Jefferson and the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Adams, Samuel (1722–1803). Samuel Adams was one of the earliest and most vocal proponents of the resistance movement in Boston. He was a member of the Sons of Liberty, among other groups active in the rebellion. He was instrumental in the establishment of Boston’s first Committee of Correspondence in 1772 and ran the Boston Town Meeting that ended shortly before the Boston Tea Party. After the Revolution, he remained a public figure and advocated harsh punishment for those involved in Shays’ Rebellion.

Burgoyne, John (1722–1792). A British military official best known in America for his participation in the ill-fated campaign to divide the resistance in 1777. Burgoyne arrived back in the colonies (he had been there earlier but without his leadership position) in 1777 with instructions to lead a contingent from Canada south toward Albany. There, he was scheduled to meet Sir William Howe, who was to have led his forces northward from Philadelphia. But Burgoyne’s campaign was mired in trouble, and by the time he faced the American general Horatio Gates at Saratoga, he stood little chance of victory. He surrendered his forces there, as well as himself. The Americans released him in 1778, and he returned to London, where he became a member of the Parliamentary opposition to the American war.

Dickinson, John (1732–1808). John Dickinson, trained as a lawyer, played a crucial role in the formation of the resistance movement. He was present at the Stamp Act Congress in New York in 1765. His Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, which he wrote to protest the Townshend duties, was widely reprinted in the late 1760s. Yet despite his views, Dickinson, who was a member of the Continental Congress, opposed the Declaration of Independence, fearing that such an action would lead to the defeat of the colonists. Nonetheless, Dickinson was the primary author of the Articles of Confederation.

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790). Printer, inventor, and scientist, Benjamin Franklin was the most famous American of the 18th century, with a reputation that stretched across the Atlantic Ocean. Born in Boston, Franklin moved to Philadelphia in 1723, where he rose through the ranks of colonial society on a personal journey recounted in his Autobiography. In 1754, he proposed a plan of union of the colonies at a meeting in Albany, but nothing came of that action. He went to London to work for the colony of Pennsylvania and later became the agent for three other colonies. Franklin had sought reconciliation but, instead, was humiliated by British officials and returned to Philadelphia to serve in the Second Continental Congress, before returning to Europe on a diplomatic mission to seek an alliance with France. Replaced in 1785 by Thomas Jefferson, Franklin returned to Philadelphia in time for the Constitutional Convention, where he delivered the final speech, which was then widely distributed.

George III (1738–1820). George III was 22 years old when he became king after the death of his grandfather. Almost immediately, he shook up the coalition that had surrounded the court and tried to exert more active control over the ministry, an effort that led to instability at the highest levels of the British administration during the 1760s. Colonists eventually held him personally responsible for ignoring their petitions, which they saw as his implication in the ministerial plot to deprive them of their liberty. He authorized the military invasion of the colonies that furthered the rebellion, believing that the loss of his American territory could be the end of the empire. On that
point, George was wrong, but his actions nonetheless caused his onetime subjects to see him as a tyrant who had committed a series of actions that justified their move toward independence.

**Hamilton, Alexander** (1757–1804). Alexander Hamilton was a young man when the Revolutionary War began, but by 1777, he had risen through the Continental Army to become an aide-de-camp to George Washington. After the war, he emerged again as a public figure in the debate over the Constitution in New York, authoring many of the essays in *The Federalist* papers, including a strong defense of the idea of the federal judiciary. He served as secretary of the treasury in Washington’s administration and was a forceful advocate for the development of the American economy, even though that action put him in opposition to Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of state, who wanted America to retain its agricultural focus. He died after suffering a mortal wound in a duel with Aaron Burr in 1804.

**Henry, Patrick** (1736–1799). Patrick Henry became a member of the House of Burgesses in Virginia in 1765, just in time to protest the Stamp Act. From that moment forward, he became a leader of the resistance to British rule. Famous for his long speeches (and for purportedly stating, “Give me liberty or give me death,” though scholars cannot prove that he actually said that), Henry was a frequent advocate for his state, which rewarded him by making him its first governor after independence. His belief in the importance of state power and sovereignty led him to become one of the most outspoken and articulate of the antifederalists.

**Howe, Sir William** (1729–1814). William Howe was the commander-in-chief of British forces in America from the start of the Revolutionary War until he resigned in 1777 in the wake of the disastrous northern campaign that had led to the surrender of John Burgoyne. Howe typically commanded forces that were better trained and armed than the Continental Army, yet he never pressed his advantage. After he returned to Britain, he was accused of running a “sentimental” kind of war, incapable of delivering the kind of devastating blow that could destroy the Continental Army. Rather than dismissing Howe as an inferior military leader, it is better to understand him as a commander who knew that if he turned his troops loose, he might prevail on the battlefield but lose the battle for the hearts and minds of the American people.

**Hutchinson, Thomas** (1711–1780). Trained as a lawyer, Thomas Hutchinson rose through the provincial establishment, eventually becoming governor in 1771. But during the rebellion, his loyalty led him to become the most despised man in Massachusetts. Stamp Act rioters destroyed his house in 1765, even though Hutchinson himself was an opponent of the act but felt that as a provincial official, he had to enforce it. He left Massachusetts in 1774 and traveled to England. There, on July 4, 1776, he received an honorary degree at Oxford for his service to the empire.

**Jefferson, Thomas** (1743–1826). Best known for being the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson was also a farmer, diplomat, public official, and primary founder of the University of Virginia. During the war, Jefferson was governor of Virginia (1779–1781), and after it ended, he served in Congress (1783–1784) before representing the United States in France (1785–1789), where he learned about the social problems caused by long-term maldistribution of wealth. After he returned, he continued to serve the public, as Washington’s secretary of state and John Adams’s vice president, before his election to the presidency in 1800. Jefferson became an advocate of the expansion of the nation with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which supported his vision of an economy and society dominated by freeholders. His Statute for Religious Freedom, which he wrote in 1777, became established in law in 1786.

**Madison, James** (1751–1836). Madison, who would eventually become the fourth president of the United States (following Jefferson), rose to prominence, not during the resistance movement, but instead, during the discussion of a new plan for a national government. He attended the meeting in Annapolis in 1786 to revise the Articles of Confederation but made his mark in Philadelphia the next year when he shaped what became known as the Virginia Plan, which laid out much of what emerged in the U.S. Constitution. He then played a determining role in the debate over the Constitution as the most important of the three authors of *The Federalist* papers. As a promise to others who feared the lack of any clear statement protecting individual rights, Madison became the primary architect of the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, now known as the Bill of Rights. Later in the decade, he used the constitutional ideas he had championed to battle the Alien and Sedition Acts.

**Otis, James** (1725–1783). James Otis, a rising star in the Anglo-American judicial establishment, turned down an opportunity to be the king’s advocate general of the Boston-based vice-admiralty court when his father, known as Col. James Otis, was passed over for a seat on the province’s supreme court. He soon took a case defending a group...
of merchants who wanted to avoid having their ships searched. The Writs of Assistance case thrust Otis into the spotlight of the incipient resistance movement, where he remained as a member of the Massachusetts general court and the author of pamphlets decrying purported British violations of colonists’ rights. By the late 1760s, however, Otis began to suffer periods of insanity, which limited his role as a public figure until his death, reportedly from a bolt of lightning in 1783.

Paine, Thomas (1737–1809). An English-born failed artisan, Paine arrived in Philadelphia in late November 1774 and quickly became involved in the resistance movement. Fourteen months later, he published Common Sense, which immediately became the most celebrated and widely read pamphlet of the pre-independence period. During the war, Paine continued to write, putting his efforts toward The American Crisis, which appeared in 1779. In 1787, he returned to England and, eventually, to political writing with his Rights of Man, published in 1791 and 1792 in response to British criticism of the French Revolution. Paine moved to France, published The Age of Reason, served a stint in the Luxembourg Prison, and finally returned to the United States in 1802, where he faded from public view on a farm in New Rochelle, New York. He died there in 1809.

Warren, Mercy Otis (1728–1814). As the sister of James Otis, it was perhaps not surprising that Mercy Otis Warren would take the side of the resistance in the move toward independence. But she achieved fame as the author of one of the earliest accounts of the History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution, which was published in three volumes in 1805. Though she was also a playwright, having written The Adulateur in 1773 and The Group in 1775, she is best known for the vigorous and highly charged prose of her History. Like other historical writers of her age, she often focused on the personalities of those involved and created a devastating portrait of Thomas Hutchinson.

Washington, George (1732–1799). Washington first emerged on the public scene as a young military officer in the run-up to what became the Seven Years’ War, but he found lasting fame as the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, which he led through virtually the entire war. His letters to Congress during the war provided both progress reports and included repeated requests for supplies. He kept the army together during its darkest days, when the British defeated his forces around New York and again at Brandywine and Germantown before the gloomy winter at Valley Forge. But Washington was capable of great military strokes, too, none more famous than his raids on Trenton and Princeton. When the last British soldiers finally departed New York in 1783, he went to Annapolis and resigned his commission. Six years later, he emerged as the first president of the United States and returned to private life after two terms, establishing a precedent (not yet in the Constitution) that remained in place until the 20th century.
Bibliography

Essential Reading:


Ammerman, David. *In the Common Cause: American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974. The most useful study of the emergence of the extra-legal committees that provided the infrastructure for the rebellion.

Anderson, Fred. *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766*. New York: Knopf, 2000. This monumental book considers the Seven Years’ War, often known as the French and Indian War to Americans, in its global context. It is a masterpiece of historical research.


———. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967; enlarged edition, 1992. This Pulitzer Prize–winning account is the most important single book ever written about the American Revolution and the foundational text for much of this course. No other historian has so successfully explained the sources of the ideas that propelled the Revolution forward.

———. *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974. Bailyn followed his landmark *Ideological Origins* with this study of Hutchinson, one of the most reviled figures during the period of the Revolution. The Hutchinson who emerges in this sympathetic study, which won the National Book Award, bears little resemblance to the caricatures offered by his contemporary enemies.


Bodle, Wayne K. *The Valley Forge Winter: Civilians and Soldiers in War*. University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 2002. This volume presents a detailed and poignant study of some of the darkest days faced by Washington’s army.

Brewer, John. *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. While many American historians were deep into their discussion of the American Revolution during the bicentennial, the British historian Brewer produced this account, which explained how politics actually worked at the moment when the imperial system began to fracture.

Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Calloway’s book, which consists primarily of a series of chapters focused on particular regions, demonstrates that the Revolution was not a single event for natives but, rather, an affair that was often characterized by local concerns, including preexisting relations between Indians and their neighbors.

the more provocative works produced by the bicentennial, Christie and Labaree did just that, and their book is a reminder of how one’s perspective can change depending on the angle of the historian’s vision.

Crèvecoeur, Hector St. John de. *Letters from an American Farmer*. First published in 1782; available in multiple editions. Crèvecoeur’s essays, especially his “What is an American?” have become crucial documents in our understanding of the American character in the 18th century.

Crow, Jeffrey J., and Larry E. Tise, eds. *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978. This collection of articles looks at the ways in which the Revolution altered the lives of diverse populations of southerners, including superb essays on regional political culture (by Jack P. Greene), women (by Mary Beth Norton), military strategy (by John Shy), and slavery (by Peter H. Wood).


Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency: George Washington*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Ellis uses his extraordinary talents to explain the life of Washington, a man whose history is so encrusted with myth that the individual beneath has been hard to locate.

Farrand, Max. *The Framing of the Constitution of the United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913. Though Farrand’s book is now almost a century old, it remains a superb account of the debates in the Philadelphia convention. Farrand was also the editor of the most detailed accounts of the convention (see Supplementary Reading, below).


Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography*. Edited by Louis P. Masur. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1993. Franklin’s book can be found in many editions; this edition has the benefit of including an excellent introduction and a series of images of Franklin which show the evolution in both his appearance and the ways that others understood him during his long life and career.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. This collection includes Geertz’s work on the nature of ideologies, which has shaped the way that the term is used in this course.


Greene, Jack P. *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Polities of the British Empire and the United States, 1607–1788*. New York: Norton, 1986. In this study of political culture across the British Empire, Greene shows that it is crucial to set American developments into a wider context, even when American historical forces seem to be *sui generis*. 


Hamilton, Alexander, John Jay, and James Madison. *The Federalist*. Edited by Jacob E. Cooke. First published as a series of articles signed by “Publius” as part of the debate on the Constitution in the state of New York, The Federalist papers were soon published as a book and have probably been in print ever since. There are many editions now available of this fundamental text, which is frequently assigned in classes and has been cited numerous times in court decisions. This definitive edition includes excellent notes explaining key portions of the text.

Hinderaker, Eric, and Peter C. Mancall. *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. In this study of the colonial hinterland, Hinderaker and Mancall argue that many of the problems of the 1760s arose because of British efforts to exert control over the American backcountry.


Kammen, Michael. *A Rope of Sand: The Colonial Agents, British Politics, and the American Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968. This is a vibrant study of the individuals who played a crucial role in maintaining communication between London and the mainland colonies. As Kammen demonstrates, colonial agents were crucial in the workings of an often precarious political system.


Kerber, Linda. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1980. This is a landmark book that illuminates the ways in which the Revolution altered the lives of women. Kerber put forward the concept of the “republican mother,” which has been widely embraced by other scholars.

Kurtz, Stephen G., and James H. Hutson, eds. *Essays on the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1973. As the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence approached, many scholars turned their attention to issues raised by the Revolution. This volume, the product of a symposium in 1971, brings together some of the leading scholars of that age; the papers they produced remain central to our understanding of the era.

Locke, John. *Two Treatises on Government*. Edited by Ian Shapiro. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. Locke’s Two Treatises has been reprinted many times, a sign of the importance of his views to all subsequent discussions about the nature of the state and its relation to those who live within it. Though Locke wrote in the late seventeenth century, his views had a powerful effect on the American revolutionaries. This edition has the benefit of including his “Letter Concerning Toleration.”

Maier, Pauline. *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*. New York: Knopf, 1997. Maier, whose study of the opposition to England propelled her into the front ranks of Revolutionary historians, has here written a penetrating analysis of the most sacred text in the American canon. A detailed account about the processes through which the Declaration of Independence emerged and then became a crucial document in American history
and culture. As in her other work, the great strength of this book lies in Maier’s deep immersion into the kinds of primary source materials that give life to long-dead and often obscure historical actors.


Marshall, P. J., ed. The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. By providing a comprehensive picture of the entire empire during the 18th century, the essays in this volume help situate the American movement for independence into a larger British world. Excellent essays touch on the far-flung parts of the empire and include several that are directly about the American scene.

Morgan, Edmund S. Benjamin Franklin. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. Morgan’s biography of Franklin is based entirely on his reading of the luminary’s papers, which he places in the context of his deep understanding of early American history. The book is frequently poignant and allows Franklin to speak for himself across the centuries.


Paine, Thomas. Common Sense and Related Writings. Edited by Thomas Slaughter. Boston: Bedford Books/St. Martin's Press, 2001. First published in 1776; available in many editions. Paine needs to be read to be understood, and all modern readers should celebrate the fact that his words can be found easily. More than 200 years later, Common Sense still has the capacity to shock.

Rakove, Jack. The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress. New York: Knopf, 1979. Rakove dug deep into the records of the first national government to produce this book, the most thorough and persuasive of any account of the rise of the national government, primarily in the 1770s.


Stone, Geoffrey R. Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1789 to the War on Terrorism. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004. Stone’s remarkable and chilling book demonstrates how the federal government has often believed it necessary to curtail free speech in times of crisis. His account serves as a warning that individual liberties have often been limited and difficult to recover.

Taafee, Stephen R. *The Philadelphia Campaign, 1777–1778*. Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2003. This richly detailed portrait of the Philadelphia region during the decisive year of 1777–1778 shows the kinds of insights that historians can have if they turn their attention to localities in times of crisis.


Warren, Mercy Otis. *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*. Two volumes. Boston, 1805; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988. Warren was among the first historians to consider the American Revolution as a historical event, and her account breathes life into countless Revolutionary figures, many of whom she knew personally. The modern reprint of this book was a great boon to readers interested in the writing of history in the Revolutionary age.

Wood, Gordon. *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Viking, 2004. This is a superb study of Franklin, the most famous American of the 18th century. Wood’s focus on the process whereby Franklin became an international symbol of Americans, then contemplated life in Europe, and finally embraced his homeland is filled with fascinating details.


———. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Knopf, 1992. Wood’s successful follow-up to his study of the process of constitution-writing, this book emphasizes the changes in the ways that Americans understood—and addressed—each other. Wood makes a compelling case that the “radicalism” of the Revolution should not be sought in social or economic changes but, instead, in the creation of a democratic society out of a monarchical heritage.


**Supplementary Reading:**


Bailyn, Bernard. *Faces of Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence*. New York: Knopf, 1990. This book brings together some of Bailyn’s most important individual essays, including insightful portraits of crucial Revolutionary figures, such as Thomas Hutchinson, John Adams, and Thomas Paine, as well as a Massachusetts artisan named Harbottle Dorr who annotated Boston’s newspapers.

Bailyn, Bernard, ed. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750–1765*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965. The pamphlets in this vital collection are crucial components in Bailyn’s study of the origins of the Revolution. The book would be listed under Essential Reading, but it is now out of print; however, it is available at better libraries.

Early American History and Culture, 1987. Just as historians had gathered together to contemplate the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1976, they did so again in preparation for the 200th birthday of the U.S. Constitution. This collection brings together thoughtful pieces not only about the Constitution itself but about American culture at the time.


Carp, E. Wayne. *To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775–1783.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. Carp’s study discusses the fact that the Continental Army often had inadequate resources even while the fate of the independence movement relied on its abilities to win against a better-armed opponent.


Colley, Linda. *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. A fascinating study of the British state in the generations leading up to and then following the American Revolution, with remarkable passages about the domestic career and reputation of George III.

David Brion Davis. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. An overview of the nature of slavery in the modern world, studded with insights about the debates over slavery and the changes in slaves’ lives during the period before and after the American Revolution.

Ellis, Joseph J. *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson.* New York: Knopf, 1996. Ellis here offers a perceptive analysis of Jefferson less as a public statesman than as a human being, primarily by focusing on his life at certain key times, including his stints in Philadelphia in the mid-1770s, Paris in the late 1780s, and Washington during his first administration.

Ellis, Joseph J. *Passionate Sage: The Character and Legacy of John Adams.* New York: Norton, 1993. John Adams seems a difficult man to understand for modern audiences. Ellis has offered an account with great sympathy and even manages to capture some of Adams’s caustic sense of humor.


Hofwit, Morton J. *The Transformation of American Law, 1780–1860*. Cambridge, Mass.: 1977. Though this study is not focused on the Revolution itself, it reveals the ways in which the legal system created by the Revolution fostered economic development in the early American Republic.


Jameson, J. Franklin. *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926. This venerable study, which should be in any decent library, remains a classic analysis of the social and economic dimensions of the Revolution.


Jensen, Merrill, ed. *English Historical Documents*, volume IX: *American Colonial Documents to 1776*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955. Jensen’s volume, no longer in print but available in good libraries, was part of a series of English documents put out by Oxford. It remains, 50 years after it was published, an almost unparalleled source for primary materials, especially the text of important acts and state papers. If this book were still in print, it would be listed under Essential Reading, above.


Mancall, Peter C. *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995. This study of the role of alcohol in the fur and deerskin trades shows how intercultural trade shaped native communities, often to the detriment of the Indians.

Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991. This study focuses on one extensive hinterland through the era of the Revolution and shows how the political movement and the changes it produced influenced life in the backcountry.


McCoy, Drew R. The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. A poignant study not only of Madison but by some who followed him and tried to understand the nation that the Revolution had brought into existence.


Merrell, James H. The Indians’ New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1989. Merrell’s study of the Catawbas remains among the most significant efforts to understand how any native people coped with colonialism and, in this instance, how the Revolution shaped the fates of Indians who remained in the East.


Nash, Gary B. The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America. New York: Viking, 2005. In this richly detailed volume, Nash brings to life the stories of many Americans in the age of the Revolution who have been overlooked by other historians. As he suggests, radicalism could be found in many locales from the 1760s through the 1780s.


Peterson, Merrill D. Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1976. This brief but penetrating study explores relations between two of the most important and well-documented of the Founders.

Plumb, J. H. The First Four Georges. London: Batsford, 1956; reprint, London: Fontana/Collins, 1966. Plumb tried to rescue the reputations of these Hanoverians by portraying “these Georges as human beings caught in exceptional
circumstances.” Fifty years after he wrote his brief book, his reflections—especially on George III—remain worthwhile.


Schiff, Stacy. *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America*. New York: Holt, 2005. This recent biography of Franklin, one of a number generated by scholars on the approach of the tercentenary of Franklin’s birth, concentrates on Franklin’s time in France during the war for independence.

Smith, Maurice H. *The Writs of Assistance Case*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. This is a long and dense study of the legal aspects of writs of assistance, with particular attention to the case in Boston in 1761.


Wallace, Anthony F. C. *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*. New York: Knopf, 1970. Despite the explosion of works relating to Native American history, Wallace’s description of this Iroquois Nation remains a far-reaching and imminently important account of how one native people coped with—and responded to—the challenges posed by the American Revolution.


Young, Alfred F. *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*. Boston: Beacon, 1999. Young’s account of a Boston shoemaker and his later understanding of the Revolution reveals the different ways that the great political moments of the resistance movement came to shape individual lives during and after the Revolution.

**Resources Available at Subscribing Research Libraries:**

*Pennsylvania Gazette*. The complete, searchable text of the most important newspaper in the Anglo-American mainland colonies in the eighteenth century.

*Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (known as ECCO). Includes the full text of every book or pamphlet published in England in the eighteenth century.

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Evans Early American Imprints. Includes the full text of all books and pamphlets produced in the mainland Anglo-American colonies and the early United States to 1800.

Internet Resources:

The Founders’ Constitution (http://press-pubs.chicago.edu/founders/). This is the most thorough site for materials relating to Constitutional history.

Avalon Project at Yale Law School (www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm). An unparalleled source for documents issued by national governments and states, including English documents dating back to Magna Carta and crucial state documents from the Revolutionary period, including state constitutions.

Adams Family Papers (www.masshist.org/digitaladams). The complete correspondence between John and Abigail Adams can be found here, along with John Adams’s Diary and his Autobiography. The correspondence between John Adams and Abigail Adams contains insights on issues large and small, including his comments during his various political positions and her observations of American life during the war and, later, as First Lady in the late 1790s.

Colonial Williamsburg (www.history.org). This site provides a virtual recreation of Williamsburg during the eighteenth century.

National Constitution Center (www.constitutioncenter.org). This site for the newly created National Constitution Center in Philadelphia provides links to many documents relating to the Founding, as well as links to sites for other aspects of the history of the most important city in the mainland Anglo-American colonies.

American Memory Project (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem). This online project of the Library of Congress presents primary sources for virtually any aspect of the American experience, with scans of over three thousand documents relating to directly to the American Revolution and its role in American culture.
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Professor Mancall has taught at the University of Southern California since 2001. After receiving his A.B. degree
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Dr. Mancall is the author of *Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800*
(Cornell, 1991); *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America* (Cornell, 1995); *At the Edge of Empire: The
Backcountry in British North America* (co-author, Johns Hopkins, 2003); and *Hakluyt’s Promise* (Yale, 2007).
He is the editor of *Envisioning America: English Plans for the Colonization of North America, 1580 to 1640* (Bedford/St.
Martin’s, 1995); *Land of Rivers: America in Word and Image*, with a foreword by Edward Hoagland
(Cornell, 1996); *American Eras: Westward Expansion* (Gale, 1999); *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers
from Contact to Removal* (co-editor, Routledge, 2000); *American Nations: Encounters in Indian Country* (co-editor,
Routledge, 2001); *Three Worlds Meet* (2003), volume I of the *Facts on File Encyclopedia of American History*
(chosen as a best reference book of the year by RUSA/ALA, Booklist/RBB, and Library Journal as well as a
Choice Outstanding Academic Title); *Travel Narratives from the Age of Discovery* (Oxford, 2006); and *The Atlantic
World and Virginia* (University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and
Culture, to be published in 2007). In 1999, Dr. Mancall and the economic historian Tom Weiss won a Program in
the Early American Economy and Society prize for early American economic history.

Dr. Mancall’s work has been featured on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” and in the *Chronicle of
Higher Education* and it has been reviewed in journals in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and
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supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and the American
Philosophical Society, among others. He has consulted with movie studios about documentary and feature films and
has been filmed for a four-part international documentary on the history of genocide. Dr. Mancall regularly consults
with teachers from the Los Angeles Unified School District through the Teaching American History program and is
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He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, the medieval historian Lisa Bitel, and their two children.
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Origins and Ideologies of the American Revolution

Scope:

The American Revolution was the most important event in our country’s history. What began as a protest movement against relatively minor taxes in the 1760s became by 1776 a movement for independence cloaked in the rhetoric of universal equality. By the time the new century opened, the Revolution had spawned a federal system of government and a bill of rights that remain at the heart of the United States today.

This 18th-century revolution was not based on self-interest, class conflict, or partisan politics. Instead it grew from several core ideas, all expressed to some extent in the Declaration of Independence: equality of all people, the ability to pursue one’s own path without undue government burdens, and the desire to live free of tyranny. American revolutionaries redefined the relationship between the individual and the state. After 1776, Americans were no longer subjects of a monarch. They had become sovereign citizens of a nation who granted to governments specified powers to maintain order and promote the common good.

This course emphasizes the role of ideas in the age of the American Revolution. After analyzing how ideas circulated in the American colonies and more broadly in the Atlantic world (Lecture Two), and surveying the population of the colonies and their place in the Atlantic community (Lectures Three through Five), the course moves chronologically through the major developments of the period from 1760 to 1800. The origins of the Revolution can be seen in the changes in the workings of the empire after victory in the Seven Years’ War (Lecture Six) and the shifts in British politics with the accession of King George III (Lectures Seven through Nine). The first glimmer of what became the Revolution appeared in a Boston courtroom in 1761, when the lawyer James Otis took the case of merchants who would rather smuggle goods into port than pay duties on them (Lecture Ten). From that improbable beginning, a resistance movement began to grow across the Anglo-American mainland colonies, and especially in Massachusetts.

During the early 1760s, the British government, faced with high debts from the Seven Years’ War, tried to raise funds by taxing its American colonists (Lecture Eleven). The colonists for their part protested at each stage, often expressing their concerns in pamphlets and newspaper articles that revealed a deep understanding of political theory and history. By 1765, colonists had taken to the streets to protest the Stamp Act (Lecture Twelve), prompting Parliament to repeal the odious measure but to pass new legislation declaring its unlimited right to pass legislation for the colonies (Lecture Thirteen). Over the next five years, political attitudes hardened on both sides (Lectures Fourteen and Fifteen), even as Benjamin Franklin sought ways to ease the crisis (Lecture Sixteen). In 1768, British soldiers arrived in Boston, and two years later, some of them killed five Americans in the so-called “Boston Massacre,” an event that quickly took on unprecedented notoriety through rebels’ efforts to publicize it (Lecture Seventeen).

By the middle of the 1770s, colonists and the British, despite many efforts by both sides to reduce tensions, were at war (Lectures Eighteen through Twenty-Two). Common Sense, a pamphlet by the recent immigrant Thomas Paine, became the widest circulated political tract of its time despite, or perhaps because of, prose so inflammatory that even the revolutionary John Adams questioned its validity (Lecture Twenty-Three). Soon after its publication, the British moved their base of operations from Boston to New York, where they remained until the end of the war (Lecture Twenty-Four).

It was not until July 1776 that the colonists, having reached the conclusion that George III was a tyrant, made a formal declaration of their desire to be a separate nation (Lecture Twenty-Five). Even then there was no consensus on the part of Americans about what the “United States” would look like. As war spread through eastern North America, military hostilities became a form of political education for Americans, who soon became all-too-familiar with epochal scenes of a nascent national drama. Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Princeton, Trenton, Saratoga, and Valley Forge all entered the consciousness of the American people (Lectures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven). In the midst of reports of battles against a far more powerful army, supported by the strongest Atlantic fleet of its time, ordinary Americans also learned about the ideas that motivated and sustained the movement for independence.

During the war Americans, who were not even sure they would emerge victorious, set about to create their own governments. They began at the state level, drafting constitutions intended to become fundamental laws. These constitutions laid out how governments were to operate and explained why such governments were legitimate expressions of the will of the people (Lecture Twenty-Eight). At the same time Thomas Jefferson drafted a statute...
for religious freedom for Virginia, a state act that remains perhaps the most significant legislation of the founding era (Lecture Twenty-Nine). Some Americans also began work on plans for a national government, though that remained a secondary concern until the war ended. Despite an alliance with France (Lecture Thirty) and the creation of a plan for a national government (Lecture Thirty-One), the war ground on until the British surrender at Yorktown (Lecture Thirty-Two) and the signing of the peace treaty in Paris in 1783 (Lecture Thirty-Three).

The end of the war did not solve the new nation’s problems. During the 1780s, the United States faced a series of crises (Lecture thirty-four) and slavery remained a dominant social and economic institution throughout the south despite the fact that its continued existence stood in stark contrast to central ideals of the Revolution (Lecture Thirty-Five). By the middle of the 1780s, discussion about the need for a better organized national system led to the calling of what became the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 (Lecture Thirty-Six). Those in attendance tried to devise a system that would recognize the sovereignty of each state while at the same time forging a union that would bring them together. When leaders of that congress finally produced a document, Americans entered into the most sustained debate about the nature of power in their history. Their discussion produced brilliant assessments of human character and ideas about the ways to control personal ambition for the good of the whole. Many thoughtful Americans, including some who had battled against the British, believed that the Constitution was a recipe for the rise of a new kind of tyrant. But the document was ratified because its proponents, including the authors of The Federalist papers, devised rhetoric sufficient to assuage reasonable fears. Nonetheless, by the early 1790s even James Madison, the primary architect of the Constitution, recognized the need for a series of amendments known as the Bill of Rights, which provided further protection for individuals against government abuses (Lectures Thirty-Eight through Forty).

The greatest documents of the Revolutionary age—the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, and the Constitution with its Bill of Rights—spoke a universal language. These statements of political ideals and American identity pointed to a bright national future. Few could have anticipated the political struggles that subsequently divided Americans during the 1790s (Lectures Forty-One and Forty-Two), but the election of 1800 (Lecture Forty-Three) demonstrated that the system created by the Revolution could withstand the shift from one political party to another. By then it was clear that the rebellion had a mixed legacy; neither Native Americans nor women were able to share in its benefits at the time, nor did it lead to the equalization of property in the society (Lectures Forty-Four through Forty-Six). The Revolution’s immediate effects could be seen in the views of some of those who lived through it and provided posterity with descriptions of how it changed American society (Lecture Forty-Seven). Despite its limitations, the Revolution established an ideology of expansive liberty, which Americans turned to in virtually all later efforts to improve their condition (Lecture Forty-Eight). We continue to do so today.
Lecture Twenty-Five

The Declaration of Independence

Scope: When Thomas Jefferson drafted what became the Declaration of Independence, he struggled to figure out how to say what needed to be said. The fact of independence was not yet a foregone conclusion; even prominent colonists who had played a direct hand in the resistance movement of the 1760s, most notably John Dickinson, could not accept the fact that independence was necessary or even possible. Jefferson and the drafters knew that they would be perceived as traitors to their king. With that idea in mind, they had to prove that the king himself had become a tyrant, thereby providing colonists with the ability and the duty to cut their ties to him. But how could they achieve that and to what end? To answer those questions, the Declaration began with a universal statement of liberty and the right of a free people to cut ties to a despot. The majority of the document focused on an enumeration of the crimes perpetrated by the king and his minions, a listing of “facts” submitted to a “candid world” in an effort to gain support for the colonies’ political aspirations. For all its grandeur, the Declaration did not solve one of the rebels’ crucial problems: They still had no plan for a government and no effective way to organize a military campaign against the most powerful army and navy in the world. But those matters could be resolved later, the document implied, once there was wide agreement on the core principles of separation. Each of the 13 colonies agreed to the terms of the Declaration (though New York’s representatives had to wait until July 15 for approval from home), providing unanimity of thought that had never before existed in the Anglo-American colonies.

Outline

I. Jefferson’s draft of the Declaration came only after Congress had taken action pointing toward separation with Britain.
   A. On May 10, 1776, Congress instructed each province to establish a new government to cope with the challenges of British military threats.
      1. John Adams’s preamble to the act caused dissent in Congress.
      2. As of May, there was not yet unanimity about the desirability of independence.
   B. By June, Congress and Jefferson had agreed that independence was necessary.

II. Jefferson’s draft included passages that Congress struck from the final document.
   A. Jefferson’s draft placed blame on the people of Britain, not just the king.
   B. Jefferson accused the king of supporting the slave trade.

III. The Declaration of Independence was, on the one hand, a statement of human rights.
   A. The preamble explained why the colonies were declaring themselves independent.
   B. The Declaration included its famous statement of human equality.
   C. It also laid out a theory of government.
      1. Specifically, it invoked the legacy of John Locke, who had described the duty of a free people to cut ties to a government that violated their interests and to create a more responsive state.
      2. The Declaration gave new and powerful expression to the idea that a people need to give their consent to be governed.
   D. The end of the long preamble explained that it was necessary to submit the facts of the dispute to a “candid world.”

IV. Most of the Declaration consisted of an enumeration of the crimes of George III.
   A. The Declaration defined the king as a tyrant who had committed a series of specific crimes against the American colonists.
      1. Among these crimes was the irresponsible way he dealt with the actual governance of the colonies.
      2. He was faulted, too, for suspending the operations of colonial legislative bodies that had spoken out against his abuses.
      3. He kept standing armies in the colonies in times of peace.
4. He quartered his troops among colonists.

B. The Declaration also spelled out the king’s refusal to answer the petitions that colonists had sent, another sign that he was a “tyrant” who was “unfit to be the ruler of a free people.”

V. Some opposed the Declaration.

A. The most important opponent was John Dickinson.
   1. Dickinson feared that France might broker a deal with Britain and, thus, deprive the colonies of vital support during the war.
   2. He believed that the excitement of the independence movement could not be sustained.
   3. He believed that Britain could still redress the outstanding grievances.
   4. Dickinson argued that the Americans were unprepared for war.
   5. He believed that there was insufficient agreement among the future states to form a single nation.

B. Despite his opposition, Dickinson remained committed to the resistance.
   1. He fought in the Revolutionary War, at least for a time.
   2. Even during the war, he returned to play a pivotal role in the formation of the new national government.

VI. The Declaration immediately became the crucial text in the resistance movement.

A. It clarified any lingering sense that reconciliation would be possible.

B. With the spread of the document, those behind the resistance hoped to find allies to join their battle against tyranny.

Essential Reading:
Declaration of Independence.
Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*.

Supplementary Reading:
Gary Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Would the Declaration have played the role it did in American history and culture if it lacked its opening passages and, instead, listed only the crimes of George III?
2. Did Congress’s decision to remove Jefferson’s indictment of slavery forever weaken this foundational document?
Lecture Twenty-Six
The War for New York and New Jersey

Scope: In the summer of 1776, the representatives of Congress established their place in history by signing the Declaration of Independence, but the document would be meaningless if the rebels lost the war to the British. The king’s generals knew that fact. From summer into fall, they attempted to destroy the Continental Army in a series of battles near New York. Yet despite having superior forces, the British, under the command of William Howe, were unable to vanquish Washington. By late autumn 1776, the main Continental Army forces had taken up residence in northeastern Pennsylvania, across the Delaware River from large contingents of British forces stationed in northern New Jersey. The fact that many of these soldiers were Hessian mercenaries did not make the situation any easier for the locals. Washington surprised the British on Christmas Day 1776, when he led a contingent across the ice-strewn Delaware into Trenton; one week later, his forces defeated the British at Princeton. The twinned victories had little effect on the overall strength of the respective sides, but the Continental victories did much for the confidence of the rebels and Congress.

Outline

I. The shift of British operations to New York altered the course of the war.
   A. With the Declaration of Independence now signed, the resistance movement gained strength and support.
      1. Individuals who had formerly been reluctant to embrace the resistance before July 4, 1776, now recognized that they were in a battle for their own liberty.
      2. The language of the Declaration made it difficult to resist for anyone who was not a committed loyalist.
   B. The British, who possessed superior military power, increased the number of troops under their command to 32,000, of which one-quarter were German mercenaries known as Hessians.

II. During the summer and fall of 1776, major battles in and around New York reminded all of the military strength of the British.
   A. In late August, the British sent 15,000 of their soldiers from their base in Staten Island into battle in Brooklyn Heights, defeating Washington, but Howe, again trying to limit the damage caused by his soldiers, allowed the Continental forces to escape.
   B. Until December, the Continental Army tried to keep itself together as it abandoned one locale after another to the superior British forces.

III. In late December 1776, Washington staged remarkable attacks on the British forces stationed in Trenton and Princeton.
   A. On the night of December 25, Washington led a force of 2,500 across the Delaware to Trenton and, a week later, went after Princeton.
      1. The first move surprised the British, who never organized an effective defense and had to surrender approximately 1,000 soldiers.
      2. The Continental Army’s assault on Princeton similarly succeeded, despite the fact that the British had sent more than 5,000 soldiers after Washington.
   B. The twin raids demonstrated that the Continentals could match the British on the field of battle, at least under the right circumstances.

IV. During their occupation of New York and New Jersey, the British army and its Hessian mercenaries brutalized the local population.
   A. As one historian has noted, “the soldiers went on a rampage of rape, and their officers did little to stop them.”
      1. Stories of atrocities spread quickly.
      2. British and Hessian soldiers, according to reports received by Congress, raped girls as young as 13.
B. Accusations of gang rape solidified the violent image of the British and Hessian soldiers and poisoned the minds of colonists against the invading army.

V. The occupation of the greater New York area alienated the very people the British believed were most loyal to the Crown.
   A. When British officers allowed armed loyalists to take over much of the war effort in the lower Hudson Valley, they acted so brutally toward their neighbors that they, too, spread the resistance movement.
   B. Attacking civilians was not a novel strategy in North America.
   C. But here, as in other places, the behavior of British and Hessian troops contributed to a process of political education.

VI. Washington’s crossing of the Delaware became a fixture in American culture.
   A. Later, this act would become crucial to the way in which Americans remembered the Revolution, e.g., the famous mid-19th century painting by Emanuel Leutze.
   B. But at the time, the action, though important, might have had less effect than the brutality of the British and Hessians.

Essential Reading:
David Hackett Fischer, *Washington’s Crossing.*

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What was the psychological effect of the events in the winter of 1776–1777?
2. What might have happened to the war effort had Washington not launched his attacks on Trenton and Princeton?
Lecture Twenty-Seven
Saratoga, Philadelphia, and Valley Forge

Scope: In 1776, Howe and his generals planned a two-pronged campaign. A British force of 7,700 soldiers would assemble in Canada and march south under the command of General John Burgoyne, from the region of Lake Champlain down to the Hudson, with the expectation that they would make it as far as New York City. At the same time, a contingent would move from the south, taking Philadelphia before marching back into New York. But the plan failed when the British moved too slowly. In early October, the Continental forces defeated Burgoyne at Saratoga. Howe made it to Philadelphia but took so long that he could provide no assistance to the northern campaign. However, the winter of 1778–1779 was hardly celebratory, either for the residents of Philadelphia, whose city was occupied by an invading army, or the Continental Army soldiers camped northwest of the city in Valley Forge. Eastern Pennsylvania during this winter presented two of the distinctive scenes of what the middle of a long war was like for the people who endured it, week after week, often with inadequate provisions.

Outline

I. In the aftermath of Washington’s victories in New Jersey, the British shifted their strategy to strike a devastating blow against the resistance.
   A. Howe decided that the way to victory was to divide the resistance by separating New England from New York and New Jersey.
      1. To do so, he organized a two-pronged campaign that would send troops under Burgoyne down the Hudson to New York; Howe himself would lead forces from Philadelphia toward New York.
      2. On paper, the plan made perfect sense, but neither Howe nor other British leaders realized how difficult it would be in the field.
      1. Burgoyne found it too difficult to move his army and supplies along the poor roads he found on his southern descent.
      2. The British were easy targets for militiamen, who attacked seemingly at will.
      3. Burgoyne finally made it to Saratoga, but his forces were outmanned and he had to surrender his men.

II. Howe’s campaign proved to be equally disastrous.
   A. He had planned to go to New York after taking Philadelphia.
      1. He chose to approach Philadelphia not via the Delaware, which was the best route, but via the Chesapeake.
      2. His strategy gave Washington more time to organize his troops and confront the British.
   B. In battles in Pennsylvania, Howe found that he could win, but victory took more time and effort than he had anticipated.
      1. Washington battled Howe at Brandywine, delaying the British march toward Philadelphia.
      2. Howe prevailed in Germantown, despite Washington’s surprise tactics.

III. Life was difficult for residents in occupied Philadelphia.
   A. After the British defeated Washington at Brandywine and Germantown, Howe’s forces took control of Philadelphia.
      1. Congress had to flee the city so that it could continue to operate.
      2. The most important city in British America had fallen, and its population now had to cope with British soldiers on a daily basis, just as the residents of Boston had once experienced.
   B. Washington’s soldiers established their winter camp in Valley Forge in late December 1778.
      1. Conditions in the camp were brutal for the soldiers, who often lacked necessary food, clothing, and shelter.
      2. The soldiers’ struggles became established in American myth—a marker of the war during dark days.

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IV. Despite much Continental success on the battlefield, the occupation of Philadelphia and the travails of Valley Forge revealed the extraordinary difficulties faced by Americans during the Revolutionary War.
   A. The struggle to survive, described in private diaries and letters, reflected the local realities of a long war.
   B. The great enthusiasm that had greeted the opening of the war in 1775 seemed to have faded into memory.

Essential Reading:
Wayne K. Bodle, The Valley Forge Winter: Civilians and Soldiers in War.

Supplementary Reading:
E. Wayne Carp, To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775–1783.
Charles Royster, A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775–1783.

Questions to Consider:
1. What did Burgoyne’s travails in New England reveal about the nature of the war in New England?
2. What did the battles at Brandywine and Germantown mean for each side?
3. How did the experience of military occupation alter the lives of the residents of Philadelphia?
4. What does the lack of supplies for the soldiers at Valley Forge suggest about Americans’ commitment to the war for independence?
Lecture Twenty-Eight
The Creation of State Constitutions

Scope: At the same time that the Continental Army and state militia units were battling against the British, representatives from towns across the newly independent states set to work creating new plans of government. They had no specific guidelines to follow, other than the general orders from Congress about the need to write state constitutions. Given that the British Constitution had never been written in a single place, there were no obvious models to be used. Despite the difficulty of the task, 10 states wrote constitutions between 1776 and 1778. Virtually all of them created governments with two houses. Pennsylvania’s unicameral legislature and specific provisions for submitting acts of legislation to the state’s citizens represented the most dramatic departure from established precedent. All the constitutions had weak executives. Governors typically lacked the power to veto acts of legislatures or to control when assemblies would meet. Each constitution also forbade multiple office holding. These measures reflected the struggles of the 1760s and early 1770s, specifically, the fear that power concentrated into the hands of a single office or office-holder would nourish incipient despots. Massachusetts broke new ground when its constitution of 1780 was crafted by men gathered for the specific purpose of writing the state’s supreme law, then ratified by each of the state’s towns.

Outline

I. Congress’s order to states on May 10, 1776, that they establish new governments for themselves initiated one of the most creative moments of the Revolutionary age.
   A. Though the British Constitution had not been written in a single place, citizens of these new states decided that they should have written constitutions.
      1. The idea of a constitution as fundamental law had not changed.
      2. The problem was in determining what should be in a constitution.
   B. In each of the states, while the war was in progress, members of provincial assemblies gathered to determine what their constitutions should include.
      1. Each constitution specified the branches of government.
      2. Of the 13 constitutions, 10 set up bicameral legislatures, but three states (Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Georgia) set up unicameral legislatures.

II. The first state constitutions reflected the political perceptions of the time.
   A. Written between 1776 and 1778, these constitutions placed strict limits on the executive branch.
   B. Because the resistance movement sprang out of a critique of the executive branch of the British Constitution, constitution writers in the states sought ways to limit future abuses of power.
   C. Each of the early constitutions denied the executive the right to veto acts of legislation, allowed governors to serve short terms only, and normally required that the governor be advised by a council that he did not choose himself.
   D. These state constitutions also included declarations of rights belonging to every citizen.

III. The Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776 was, in some senses, the most radical of these documents.
   A. It created a unicameral legislature, thereby denying the idea that differences within the population had to be expressed in different houses of the government.
   B. It created a Counsel of Censors, which was to meet every seven years to review acts of legislation.
   C. Its famous Section 15 proposed that all acts be sent to the people at large for their consent.

IV. The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 altered conceptions of state constitutions.
   A. Recognizing that a constitution was a fundamental law, those who drafted it required that it be sent to the 240 towns in the state for their approval.
   B. The towns responded with suggested changes, many of which were incorporated into the constitution.
C. This model of drafting and ratifying became a fixture of American political thought and later appeared in the U.S. Constitution.

V. The writing of state constitutions reflected the problems Americans faced in crafting fundamental law.
   A. Writers of state constitutions had no obvious way to assert the fundamentality of the charters they were creating.
   B. But they recognized that the constitutions they were writing needed to be different from normal legislative acts.
      1. Constitutions needed to become the foundations of new government systems.
      2. State constitution writers needed the residents of the states to agree to live under the governments thus created.

VI. The fact that constitutions first emerged on the state level had far-reaching implications for the creation of the national government during and after the Revolutionary War.
   A. The state constitutions reflected the prevailing idea that states were sovereign entities.
   B. Their sovereignty predated the creation of a national government.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did most Americans believe that a bicameral form of government was best on the state level?
2. How did the debate over the constitution in Massachusetts reflect Americans’ emerging sense about constitutional law?
Lecture Twenty-Nine

Jefferson’s Statute for Religious Freedom

Scope: In the age of creating state constitutions, Thomas Jefferson put his talents to work on a different kind of document. Rather than planning how his state should function, in 1777, he argued that everyone within its bounds should have the freedom to practice whatever religion they chose. But in writing the text for this statute, which became part of Virginia law when it was ratified in 1781, Jefferson had to wrestle with the nature of religious belief and what role if any the state should play in matters of private conscience. His statute lacked a definition of religion per se. Instead, Jefferson, a deist himself, gave voice to the idea that an individual needed absolute freedom of thought. In the 18th century, when many European societies still maintained established religions supported through taxation, Jefferson’s statute was among the most radical ideas put forward—even more radical than the Declaration of Independence and its claims of universal equality. Conscious that he was writing a law and not a constitution, Jefferson provided a preamble that spoke at length about the value of freedom of thought. The act itself was almost anticlimactic, at least rhetorically. But it included wording that gave this statute almost the same standing as a state constitution. Jefferson long cherished the act and dictated that his authorship be one of the three achievements (along with being author of the Declaration of Independence and father of the University of Virginia) listed on his gravestone at Monticello.

Outline

I. Jefferson’s Statute for Religious Freedom was a landmark achievement of the Revolutionary generation.
   A. In general, in the Western political tradition, a single church was formally associated with the state.
      1. The Church of England retained its role as the national church in England.
      2. Across Europe, the Catholic Church also remained tied to many governments.
   B. Established churches were supported by compulsory taxes.

II. Before the Revolution, the position of churches in colonial society had changed over time.
   A. Although the Anglican Church was established in some places, it was not a national church.
   B. New England Puritans rejected the idea of a single established church.
      1. Having been oppressed in England, they did not see the benefits of re-creating the system in North America.
      2. Given that Puritans were Congregationalists who set church policies locally, they were not inclined to support a system that dictated compliance for all churches.
      3. However, the story of the Puritans, especially the Salem witch prosecutions of 1692, suggests that even a group of persecuted people cannot always anticipate how to create a society in which they will have the religious freedom that they sought.
   C. In other parts of the colonies, there was even less opportunity to establish a single church.
      1. New York, which had once been a Dutch colony, had attracted a population with differing religious views, though the Anglican Church was powerful at times.
      2. Pennsylvania and Rhode Island each famously tolerated a wide range of religious expression.
      3. Only in parts of the South, notably Virginia, was there much opportunity for an established church, and even there, the religious system was more diverse than in England.

III. Jefferson believed that establishing a church was inappropriate for Virginia or, presumably, any other locale.
    A. His statute went well beyond the idea of establishing a specific church.
    B. The preamble of the act laid out an argument for freedom of thought in absolute terms.
       1. Jefferson did not believe that the state should be able to govern any individual’s faith.
       2. He saw religious knowledge as comparable to other kinds of knowledge and argued that individuals should choose their own faith based on their understanding of the world around them.
    C. The preamble itself became a monument of Revolutionary rhetoric.
       1. Its rhetorical flourishes demonstrated that Jefferson’s drafting of the Declaration of Independence was, in some ways, a warm-up for this display of his talents.
2. In many ways, it remains one of the most accessible documents of the Revolutionary age.

IV. The statute was an act of law, not part of a constitution, but Jefferson argued that it should be treated as if it were part of the fundamental law.

A. This statute was adopted by legislators, not by the public at large.
   1. Those who ratified it in 1781 acted in their capacity as representatives of the people.
   2. All involved, including Jefferson, knew that another legislature could eliminate the statute.

B. In order to give this statute greater standing, Jefferson crafted specific wording that made it seem different from other laws.
   1. The second section (after the preamble) stated the law simply.
   2. The final section trumpeted its significance by warning any who might want to change it in the future that the effort to do so would be dangerous.

V. The Statute for Religious Freedom was one of three achievements, along with being the author of the Declaration of Independence and the founder of the University of Virginia, that Jefferson chose to have inscribed on his tombstone.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Was the freedom to practice the religion of one’s choice significantly different from other freedoms that individuals possessed?
2. Why would Jefferson opt to have this idea established in an act of law, rather than as part of the constitution of the new state of Virginia?
Scope: The rebels had sought support from abroad since the beginning of the war, and many had hoped that the French would become their allies. That belief made sense, given that the French had only recently lost to the British and presumably wanted to get at least some of their territory back again. In order to gain support, the Congress sent Franklin to Paris. Although his task was straightforward, his move toward securing the alliance was only one thing on his mind during those years. Instead, he found himself at home in Europe’s grandest city. Parisians treated him like a celebrity. Even the philosophes embraced him and promoted his image: the natural genius produced in an unpolluted continent, a symbol of human potential and intellectual power. Franklin manipulated his image, often choosing to be depicted wearing a raccoon-skin cap. His face was everywhere in Paris during those years. But despite his popular acclaim, the French saw no urgency in Franklin’s task. As far as they were concerned, the longer the war went on without them, the better. But they knew that if the tide did turn against the British and they did not support the Americans, they would have missed a chance to establish a valuable new alliance. In early February 1778, the French signed two treaties with the new nation, one commercial and the other diplomatic. The two nations bound themselves to the common cause of defeating Britain.

Outline

I. Franklin was, in all likelihood, already the most famous American of the 18th century.
   A. His intellectual reputation, especially his widely known scientific experiments relating to electricity, made him stand out in comparison to other Americans.
   B. The French were more enthusiastic about Franklin’s achievements than anyone else, including Americans.
   C. Leading intellectuals and many of Paris’s most famous citizens greeted Franklin with open arms when he arrived in the city in 1776 as part of a delegation to gain French support for the American war effort.
      1. Franklin became the visual personification of an ideal America and of American potential, e.g., in a 1777 engraving by Augustin de Saint-Aubin and in paintings by Joseph-Siffred Duplessis.
      2. One highlight of his visit was a public meeting with Voltaire on a stage at the Academy of Sciences in 1778.

II. By the time Franklin arrived in Paris, he was deeply embittered by his time in London and with the English government.
   A. He was particularly unhappy at the treatment he had received because of the publication—against his wishes—of the private letters of Thomas Hutchinson.
   B. Convinced that he could no longer handle matters in London, Franklin returned to Philadelphia in 1775 and soon joined the Continental Congress.

III. Franklin’s experience in Britain made him especially open to the French.
   A. He had been publicly abused by British officials, who blamed him for supporting the resistance even when he was trying to halt it.
   B. He bore particular animosity toward Lord Hillsborough, who had become the imperial official responsible for American affairs in 1773.

IV. The Americans needed an alliance with the French to defeat the British.
   A. Congress hoped that the French would embrace the resistance, at least in part to avenge their defeat in the Seven Years’ War.
      1. Franklin and the other commissioners (Silas Deane and Arthur Lee) arrived in hopes of getting a rapid French declaration of support for the resistance.
      2. As the delegation remained, Franklin, in particular, worked to elevate any French commitment from a statement of support to a full-blown alliance.
   B. News from America advanced the interests of the delegation in Paris.
1. Reports of Burgoyne’s surrender had a drastic effect and overcame anxieties raised by accounts of the British seizure of Philadelphia.
2. Despite continued British occupation of two major cities, the French came to believe that the Americans might prevail in the contest.

V. Fearing that the war might end before they chose sides, the French, in December 1777, signed one treaty establishing an alliance and another for trade with the Americans.

A. The two agreements cemented the relationship between the United States and France, though the French were in no hurry to send military assistance.
B. Despite the delays, the Americans greatly improved their chances to defeat the British.
C. Spain, an ally of France, soon pledged its support to the United States, too, and other European nations distanced themselves from Britain.

VI. A war once limited to the North American mainland now became, for the British, a transatlantic conflict.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Edmund S. Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin*.
Stacy Schiff, *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America*.
Esmond Wright, *Franklin of Philadelphia*.

Questions to Consider:
1. In what ways did Franklin’s personal reputation advance the goals of the new nation?
2. How did longstanding European tensions influence the earliest diplomatic overtures of the newly formed United States?
Lecture Thirty-One
The Articles of Confederation

Scope: When Congress tried to organize supplies for the Continental Army, it had done so with the authority vested in it by the Articles of Confederation. First drafted in 1777, the Articles essentially put on paper the actual working arrangements of the Second Continental Congress. But the Articles demanded unanimous consent to be changed, and representatives from Maryland refused to agree to them until the matter of the state’s western boundary could be settled. By 1781, colonists had found a way to please Maryland, and the covenant binding the states became law. Typically understood as a deficient version of the U.S. Constitution, the plan of government is, instead, better interpreted for what it was: a working document, put together in time of war (and only shortly before the occupation of Philadelphia), and an expression more of the willingness of states to work together than a plan for how they should do so. The Articles created a very weak central state that was essentially subordinate to the 13 sovereign states that enacted it. The central government had no authority to raise money through taxation; it could make requests of the states, then use whatever funds it received. The central government also had limited diplomatic and commercial authority. Each state would have a single vote. But despite its limitations, the Articles nonetheless created the legal basis for states to deal with one another in an entity now called the “United States of America.”

Outline

I. Congress recognized that it needed a plan for a national government.
   A. The Articles of Confederation emerged from Congress in November 1777.
   B. Despite the obvious importance of having an organized national government, that issue was not a primary focal point at the time.
   C. Congress and others poured their intellectual energies into the creative process of making state constitutions.

II. The Articles essentially put on paper the operating assumptions of Congress.
   A. John Dickinson, who did not sign the Declaration of Independence, played the leading role in crafting the Articles.
   B. He sought to describe what Congress was already doing, not to break new constitutional ground.

III. Under the Articles, Congress was a confederation of 13 sovereign states.
   A. During the war, those states joined together for their common good.
   B. The Articles laid out the legal basis for the national government to operate.
   C. The Articles did not include any statements of rights.
      1. Unlike state constitutions, the Articles required no such assertions.
      2. Given that the central government lacked the ability to deprive people of their rights, there was no need to describe what those rights were.

IV. The content of the Articles reflects prevailing thinking about the role of centralized authority.
   A. The document emphasized state sovereignty, not national authority.
   B. The system created a weak national government.
      1. Congress had the authority to ask states for funds but not to tax them directly.
      2. The Articles were a “firm league of friendship” necessary in a time of war.
   C. The Articles established the idea that Americans had common interests.
      1. The “full faith and credit” clause of Article IV created the United States as a nation.
      2. The Articles tried to impose some limits on states’ actions that would interfere with other states.
      3. Congress welcomed Canada into the confederation, but no other state could join without nine states agreeing to do so.
   D. Each state possessed a single vote, a reflection of the fact that this was a Congress of sovereign states.
V. Article IX included a description of how disputes between states were to be resolved.
   A. It laid out a way for sovereign states to submit grievances to a committee and be bound by the results.
   B. The clause operated only once, in an effort to halt a longstanding dispute between Connecticut and Pennsylvania relating to ownership of the northern tier of Pennsylvania.

VI. Changes in the Articles required the unanimous consent of the states.
   A. This proved among the most vexing parts of the Articles.
   B. Any state that did not agree with the need for a change could ignore any negotiations and, thereby, stymie attempted reform of the system.

VII. Americans celebrated the ratification of the Articles in 1781.
   A. Newspapers reported on the positive public reaction that ratification brought.
   B. The war was not yet over, but Americans had crafted a system in which states could work together for the common good.

VIII. Though the Articles have seemed to many later observers only a pale predecessor of the United States Constitution, looked at on its own it merits serious treatment.

**Essential Reading:**
Articles of Confederation.

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. How can one explain the differences between the efforts made to create state constitutions, on the one hand, and the Articles of Confederation, on the other?
2. What was the spirit animating the Articles of Confederation?
Lecture Thirty-Two
Yorktown and the End of the War

Scope: After the disaster of 1778, the British once again altered their strategy. This time they reasoned that support for the American cause was weakest in the South, which had already become the most conservative portion of the Anglo-American colonies. By moving troops into the South and seeking alliances with wealthy southerners, the British managed to find ample support. As a result of the change in policy, the war dragged on for three more years, and an observer might have believed that the British would ultimately prevail. But when the British took spoils of war in the South, rebels stoked the indignation of locals with inflammatory newspaper articles and pamphlets. Eventually, Cornwallis believed that the British had to make it to the coast of Virginia, where they would be resupplied. But once his 10,000 soldiers reached Yorktown, a large Continental force of 17,000, led by Washington and supported by a French fleet, surrounded them. The siege of Yorktown, begun on September 28, 1781, cut off supplies for the British. On October 19, Cornwallis surrendered to Washington. Fighting continued sporadically, often in the hinterland, where British troops, loyalists, and some Native Americans still battled. But by then, the war was essentially over. Newspapers trumpeted the word across the new nation. Incredulous Britons had to accept the fact that their all-conquering army and navy had been bested by former colonists and poorly equipped soldiers.

Outline

I. Stalemate and defeat in the North from 1776 to 1778 convinced the British military that it should move its operations to the South.
   A. The British hoped to take advantage of the presence of greater numbers of loyalists in the South than in New England or the new states of the mid-Atlantic region.
      1. Some southern loyalists had traveled to Britain to tell the ministry that the king’s troops would fare better in the South.
      2. Sensing failure in the North, the British, now under the direction of General Henry Clinton, embraced the new strategy.
   B. Clinton left New York on December 26, 1779, bound for Charleston.
      1. The British believed that if Clinton could take the most important city in the South, the tide of the war would turn, because loyalists would then rally to the cause.
      2. Clinton’s forces prevailed in mid-May, when the city surrendered to the British, along with more than 5,000 Continental soldiers—the largest surrender of the entire war.

II. Despite the victory along the coast, General Charles Cornwallis (who took over when Clinton returned to the North) could not prevail in the South.
   A. The revised British strategy had worked in 1779 and 1780, but then it began to collapse.
   B. A reorganized Continental effort slowed British advances away from the coast.
   C. The British faced problems in the South because they could never defeat the ultimate source of American power—the deep allegiance that many Americans developed for the movement for independence.
      1. In their search for traditional targets, the British neglected the political aspects of the war, especially the effects of their campaigns.
      2. Rather than pacifying the territory, the British often enflamed passions, especially as their southern campaign developed a reputation for ferocity.

III. Cornwallis’s campaign in the South led him toward the coast, where he hoped to gather British troops together but, instead, found himself besieged.
   A. When he reached Yorktown, Cornwallis discovered that Washington had a force of 17,000 troops under his command, and a French fleet lay just off the coast to provide strategic support.
   B. Clinton had been sending a force of 6,000 troops from the North but recognized that such an effort could not succeed and decided to turn his forces northward again.
C. Surrounded and outnumbered, Cornwallis surrendered, bringing a formal end to the conflict in North America.

IV. The British had a difficult time coping with the fact of their loss.
   A. News of Cornwallis’s surrender reached London and strengthened John Adams’s hand in negotiations.
      1. The war dragged on in the North, where Clinton continued to wage periodic small-scale battles.
      2. But, as Adams knew, the conflict had essentially come to an end.
   B. Cornwallis’s surrender guaranteed American independence.
      1. With the loss of the South, the British now stood no chance to recover in North America.
      2. Skirmishes continued until the final British troops left, but the long war was finally drawing to a close.
   C. Americans celebrated their triumph and saw it as a confirmation of the validity of the movement for independence.

V. The American victory came as a result, at least in part, of a series of failed British strategies.
   A. At each stage of the war, the British miscalculated.
   B. In the end, they could not win a political contest, even if they possessed a superior army and navy.
      1. As the historian John Shy has argued, the war became a process of political education.
      2. Wherever British soldiers went, they alienated too many Americans, who eventually sided with the rebels.
   C. The American achievement was solidified on the battlefield and finalized at Yorktown, but it was the result more of politics and ideas than arms.

Essential Reading:


Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What did the loss of the South mean for the British war effort?
2. Why weren’t the British able to capitalize on the deep-seated conservatism that characterized politics in the South?
3. What was the relationship between results on the battlefield and the larger political movement?
Lecture Thirty-Three
The Treaty of Paris of 1783

Scope: Defeat and surrender at Yorktown signaled an end to major conflicts, but the war dragged on into early 1783, when the last British ship left Long Island. Now diplomats gathered again in Paris, this time to end any British claims to the mainland colonies. The treaty reflected a new political landscape. The king accepted the independence of the United States, and his representatives drew the boundaries between the new nation and Canada, which never joined the rebellion. The settlement had wider ramifications, too, and demonstrated that the appearance of France and Spain as allies of the United States had consequences beyond what occurred on the battlefield. Once news of the treaty spread across the Atlantic, the last British contingents, still an occupying force in New York, departed for their return home on December 4. On December 23, Washington resigned his commission, a sign that the United States would be run by civil, not military, authorities.

Outline
I. Despite Cornwallis’s surrender, negotiations to end the war remained tense.
   A. France’s alliance with the United States in 1778 included a treaty with Spain, whose interests needed to be fulfilled in the treaty.
   B. The Spanish wanted to reclaim Gibraltar from the British.
   C. Sensing the need to settle matters with Britain, the Spanish agreed to peace in exchange for the island of Minorca and east and west Florida.

II. Even before the end of the war, diplomats from the United States recognized that the new nation would need time to pay off its debt.
   A. Franklin worked with the Comte de Vergennes to settle terms for repayment.
   B. The French also guaranteed a debt that the United States owed to the Netherlands.

III. With tensions eased with France and Spain, the United States negotiated for a dramatic expansion of its lands in North America.
   A. Under the terms of the treaty of 1783, the United States extended from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, though Canada remained British.
   B. The French regained control of Senegal and Tobago.
   C. The British agreed to American independence.
   D. Navigation on the Mississippi River would be open to the United States and to Britain.

IV. Once news of the treaty reached North America, the British withdrew their last forces from New York.
   A. The war, which had dragged on for eight years, finally came to an end.
   B. Loyalists and British officials feared there might be chaos in New York.
      1. Rumors circulated that loyalists would face troubles.
      2. Those who supported the new nation celebrated the departure of the British.
   C. The last British ships embarked on December 4, 1783.

V. The end of the war brought into public discussion the former property of loyalists.
   A. Between 60,000 and 100,000 loyalists left the colonies during the war.
      1. The vast majority had traveled to other British colonies, notably Canada.
      2. The richer loyalists or those with political connections fled to London.
   B. The treaty specified that the United States would consider restitution, which began a process that continued for years, while loyalists tried to establish legitimate claims to their American property.

VI. The end of the war also brought an end to George Washington’s wartime service.
   A. On December 23, he went to Congress, then sitting in Annapolis, and resigned his commission.
B. Washington’s resignation was crucial for the future of the United States.
C. Despite his popularity, he recognized that the nation should be run by civilian, not military, authorities.

Essential Reading:
Joseph Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington*.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What was the significance of British recognition of American independence?
2. Why was Washington’s resignation notable?
Lecture Thirty-Four
The Crises of the 1780s

Scope: During the war years, the Articles served sufficiently well to keep the Continental Army at least adequately supplied. But after the treaty of 1783 ended the conflict, defects in the Articles began to become more apparent. By the middle of the 1780s, Congress realized that it was going to be impossible to pay off the debt of the war itself because the states refused to meet the Congress’s requests. When Europeans sensed that the country had no effective commercial or military authority, they began to make it more difficult for American ships to ply their goods overseas. As complaints mounted, representatives of most of the states gathered in Annapolis in 1786 in an effort to revise the Articles. But because revision required unanimous support, that task failed in the short run, though the delegates did decide they would meet in Philadelphia the following year. In the meantime, the state of Massachusetts realized that it was unable to collect taxes from its own citizens. That dispute fueled a conflict known as Shays’ Rebellion in January 1787, when farmers in the western portion of the state marched on an arsenal in Springfield with the goal of arming themselves for an assault on Boston. Europeans who heard of the conflict believed that it confirmed their notions that republican governments were too weak to meet such threats. Although Massachusetts did put down the incipient domestic rebellion, observers in the states came to believe that the national government needed the ability to suppress internal insurrection. Yet for all its limitations, Congress managed to pass the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The bill forbade the movement of slavery into the Old Northwest and imposed a geographical grid on top of the land, thereby establishing rules for the expansion of the nation into the West.

Outline

I. At the end of the war, the residents of the United States suffered a series of unanticipated problems.
   A. Without a strong national government, Americans discovered that they had little leverage in dealings with Europeans.
      1. The limitations proved burdensome for merchants trying to achieve favorable terms.
      2. There was no unified diplomatic power for Americans abroad.
      3. Lacking protection from an effective navy, American ships often fell victim to pirates.
   B. Congress could not retire the war debt because the Articles of Confederation denied it the power to tax individuals or states.

II. Tensions in Massachusetts over the state’s own debt led to a crisis.
   A. Daniel Shays led a rebellion of western Massachusetts farmers refusing to pay taxes, thereby presenting a threat to the state’s government.
      1. The national government had no obvious authority to intervene.
      2. America’s European critics saw the development as proof of the inherent weakness in any republican form of government.
   B. After the rebellion collapsed, Thomas Jefferson wrote about the rarity of such events in the United States.

III. By 1786, such problems were so pronounced that many Americans thought the time had come to revise the Articles of Confederation.
   A. At a meeting in Annapolis, representatives from individual states hoped to revise the Articles’ commercial clauses.
   B. They realized that revising the Articles would be impossible at the moment; thus, they agreed to meet in 1787 in Philadelphia.

IV. Congress passed legislation to control movement into the Northwest.
   A. Land ordinances of 1784 and 1785 had set aside lands in the Old Northwest for possible future settlements and imposed a grid on the landscape to facilitate development.
   B. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 became the most important statute of its kind.
      1. It specified specific political rights for the settlers of the new territory.
2. Congress authorized the ordinance because its members believed that population growth would continue, and thus, there would be a continued demand for western expansion.
3. The ordinance prohibited slavery in the Old Northwest.

V. Though commonly deemed a failure, the government created by the Articles of Confederation must be understood in its own context.
   A. Written during the war, at a time when no one could have predicted that the rebellion would succeed, the Articles proved inadequate for the challenges of the postwar period.
   B. Those in Congress faced an almost impossible task of trying to get 13 sovereign states to agree on policies for the good of all.
   C. Some modern-day textbooks do not even include the document, a reflection of the later dominance of the U.S. Constitution and many Americans’ inability to see how Revolutionary ideas evolved over time.

**Essential Reading:**
Articles of Confederation.

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. How did the public issues of the 1780s reflect the ideology of the Revolution?
2. Was it possible for the nation to continue with the Articles of Confederation for an indefinite period?
Lecture Thirty-Five
African Americans and the American Revolution

Scope: The treaty of 1783 signaled a new day for the citizens of the United States, but the day-to-day lives of many of the residents of the new nation continued to be dominated by older modes of thinking. This was especially clear in the debate that arose relating to slavery. During the colonial era, some New Englanders and residents of Pennsylvania had made major strides toward eliminating slavery, but the institution continued to exist and, in fact, dominated the economy of much of the South. From the moment that the Declaration of Independence issued its cry for universal equality, the status of what some historians have called America’s “peculiar institution” became uncertain. Or, more precisely, the future of the institution differed from one part of the new nation to another. In New England and Pennsylvania, legislators immediately eliminated slavery. In New York and New Jersey, governing bodies put in place new laws that would lead to the gradual abolition of the institution. In the upper South states of Maryland and Virginia, slavery remained on the books, but individual slave holders made the decision to free their slaves. In the lower South, where the institution of bound labor was even more crucial to the economy as it shifted toward cotton production, slavery in some ways became strengthened through the rise of new and pernicious theories about the alleged innate inferiority of Africans. As the new century emerged, the question of slavery loomed ever larger.

Outline

I. Before the Revolution, slavery had a specific legal meaning.
   A. Though colonists often spoke of the fear of being turned into “slaves” by the British, that was a political distinction very different from the legal sense of slavery as it existed in the mainland (and other) colonies.
   B. By the time of the Revolution, slavery referred specifically to the situation in which native-born African Americans and transplanted West Indians and Africans were held against their will as a form of property to work for others.
      1. Slaves served for life, unlike indentured servants.
      2. A slave’s status came from his or her mother; status followed the womb.
      3. Slaves were of African, not European, ancestry.

II. At the time of the Revolution, slavery existed across the British mainland colonies but was not everywhere the same.
   A. Many white northerners owned slaves.
      1. Slaves were especially common in cities and on the farms of the wealthy.
      2. The economy of the North was dependent on free labor, not slave labor.
   B. Slavery was more common in the Chesapeake colonies and in the South.
      1. Slaves were concentrated in the most economically important components of the southern economy.
      2. Planters in the South relied on slaves to perform the vast majority of labor on their estates.

III. Slavery was an obvious contradiction to the principles of the Revolution.
   A. It violated the spirit of the Declaration of Independence.
   B. It appeared in veiled ways in three places in the U.S. Constitution.
      1. The three-fifths clause of Article I separated slaves from the rest of the population for reasons of taxation and apportionment of representatives.
      2. The fugitive slave clause of Article IV demanded the return of runaway slaves.
      3. One provision in Article V forbade any amendments that could eliminate the slave trade before 1808.

IV. The future of slavery shifted from one region to the next.
   A. Where slavery as a social fact was weak, it was abolished or provisions were made for it to be abolished.
      1. By the early 1780s, it was abolished throughout New England and Pennsylvania.
      2. New York and New Jersey legislators enacted provisions for the gradual abolition of slavery.
B. In places where lands were only recently being settled by non-Native Americans, slavery was essentially forbidden. For example, the Northwest Ordinance forbade the spread of slavery into the Ohio Country (known as the Old Northwest).

C. In the upper South states of Virginia and Maryland, slavery remained the basis of the economy.
   1. The plantation economy was still intact after the Revolution.
   2. But though the institution survived, individuals were allowed to free their slaves through acts of private manumission.

D. In the lower South states of the Carolinas and Georgia, the institution remained in place.
   1. Its proponents offered new arguments about the alleged inferiority of Africans in an effort to legitimate their continued keeping of slaves.
   2. This effort paradoxically fed a new form of racism that had not yet been expressed in North America.

V. The Revolution posed a challenge to slavery.
   A. Slavery, because it was involuntary, violated the Revolutionary sense of the contractual basis of society.
   B. In a society in which immigrants could choose to become citizens, the existence of slavery was especially noteworthy.
   C. After 1776, it was impossible to dismiss the fact that slavery’s existence was a stark reminder of the limits of the ideology of the Revolution.

VI. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson took different paths when it came to slavery.
   A. Washington kept his slaves for the duration of his life, but he ordered them freed upon his death.
   B. Jefferson, the man most closely associated with the ideals of equality expressed during the Revolution, kept his slaves during his life and did not establish provisions in his will to free them.

VII. Slavery survived in the United States until it was abolished with the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution, adopted immediately after the triumph of the Union over the Confederacy in the Civil War.

Essential Reading:
David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823*.

Supplementary Reading:
David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What does the survival of slavery tell us about the nature of equality in the age of the American Revolution?
2. Was it enough for the Revolutionary generation to make slavery a problem, or should we consider their failure to resolve the issue a sign of the hypocrisy of their age?
Lecture Thirty-Six

The Constitutional Convention

Scope: In June 1787, 55 men met in the same rooms where, 11 years earlier, the Second Continental Congress had authorized and signed the Declaration of Independence. The stakes were just as high now. They had gathered to revise the Articles of Confederation, but they recognized that they needed to create a national government with specific powers relating to the nation’s diplomatic and commercial authority and its ability to raise taxes and suppress domestic uprisings. Other than finding solutions for commonly perceived problems, those in attendance at the meeting disagreed about other matters. Representatives of populous states and small states could not initially agree about how each was to be represented in the new central government. They recognized that the Articles of Confederation created nothing more than a congress of sovereign states. The task was to go beyond that wartime achievement. Other disputes threatened, too, such as the legacy of the Articles’ assertion that changes had to be agreed upon by representatives of each state. Slavery had become divisive as never before, forcing those in attendance to sort out issues of taxation and representation based on the idea that slaves were not fully human.

Outline

I. Even during the war, many Americans began to question the powers they had granted to legislatures in the earliest state constitutions.
   
   A. The later state constitutions granted more power to the executive.
      1. Massachusetts’s 1780 constitution allowed for direct election of the governor and restoration of some executive authority.
      2. The system of approving the state constitution became widely copied, because it seemed the best way to judge the views of the population at large.
   
   B. Some of the unique features of the early constitutions faded away.
      1. Unicameralism gave way to bicameralism. Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Georgia all moved to two-house systems.
      2. Pennsylvania eliminated its Counsel of Censors, which had met only a single time (in 1783).
   
   C. The process of writing constitutions underwent a transformation.
      1. Massachusetts was the first state to have individuals elected specifically for the process of writing a constitution, then sending it out for ratification.
      2. The goal, as with the ratification process, was to invite the widest possible participation in the process of writing fundamental law.

II. Efforts to revise the Articles of Confederation had failed.
   
   A. By the mid-1780s, members of Congress recognized that they had no authority to sort out the problems caused by the lack of a coherent national trade policy.
   
   B. Representatives from several states met in Annapolis in September 1786 to consider ways to improve the economic situation, specifically by finding ways to regulate trade.
      1. Unable to solve the matter, those attending came to believe that the time had come to revise the Articles.
      2. Congress responded to the request and asked that each state send representatives to Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 to draft revisions to the Articles.

III. The members of what became the Constitutional Convention sought to fix the specific problems Americans had experienced under the Articles of Confederation.
   
   A. The Constitutional Convention laid bare enormous differences among the states.
   
   B. The most serious issue related to representation for large and small states.
      1. Representatives from large states (notably Virginia) wanted increased power in the national government, commensurate with their growing populations.
      2. Delegates from small states feared a diminution of their power in national affairs.
3. Debate centered on two plans of government: the Virginia Plan, which gave increased authority to people, specifically to the number of people, and less authority to the states themselves, and the New Jersey Plan, which sought to maintain as much as possible the structure of the Confederacy as it existed under the Articles of Confederation, while giving more power to the government to solve particular problems.
   a. The Virginia Plan attempted to stop multiple office-holding and called for a bicameral legislature, with the upper house elected by the lower house from a list of candidates provided by state legislatures.
   b. The New Jersey Plan provided for the federal government to tax people directly, introduced the idea that slaves would count as three-fifths of a human being, sought to bar re-election into the executive, and provided for judges serving for life.
4. Alexander Hamilton, who was just emerging onto the national political stage, offered his own plan for the frame of the central government.
   a. He believed that senators should serve for life.
   b. He argued that the executive should also have a life term.
   c. Under his plan, the national government could determine if state laws needed to be negated if they conflicted with federal policies.

C. Some delegates also wanted to resolve the future of slavery.

IV. The significant breakthrough was a plan for a bicameral legislature in which states would be represented equally in the Senate, and the people, in the House of Representatives.
   A. The idea of a congress of sovereign states with equal power faded, though not entirely.
   B. The national government had far more power than Congress previously possessed.

V. The convention in Philadelphia witnessed a shift in political leadership.
   A. Some Revolutionary leaders, including Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Samuel Adams, were unable to attend the meeting.
   B. James Madison emerged as the most important political theorist of the Revolutionary era.
   C. Of the 55 men in attendance, 16 refused to sign the Constitution.
      1. Their act mirrored John Dickinson’s at the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.
      2. After the meeting concluded, some of these men became active participants in the national discussion of the Constitution, using their influence to battle the new plan of government.
   D. The new generation of political leaders inherited the success of the Revolution—the fact of independence from Britain.
      1. They did not have to explain why the break with Britain was necessary.
      2. With that ideological battle won, the writers in Philadelphia in 1787 could concentrate their efforts on creating a new form of government appropriate for the new nation.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Was it possible that changes at the state level could have solved the problems the American nation faced in the 1780s?
2. What were the most important compromises of the Philadelphia convention?
Timeline

October 25, 1760.............................Death of King George II and accession of King George III.
February 1761 .........................The Writs of Assistance case is argued in Boston.
February 10, 1763 ...........................The Peace of Paris is signed, bringing to an end the Seven Years’ War and greatly expanding British territory in North America.
October 7, 1763 .................The English establish the Proclamation Line, which attempts to stop all colonial migration west of the crest of the Appalachian Mountains.
December 13, 1763 .........................The Paxton Boys, a backwoods group of vigilantes, slaughter peaceful Conestoga Indians in Lancaster and march on Philadelphia, where they are turned back two weeks later.
April 5, 1764 .................................Parliament passes the Sugar Act, which lowers taxes on imported molasses in an effort to discourage smuggling.
April 19, 1764 ..................................Parliament authorizes the Currency Act, which limits the use of paper money in the North American colonies.
June 13, 1764 ..................................The Massachusetts general court establishes the colonies’ first Committee of Correspondence to organize protest against British government actions.
August 1764 ....................................Boston merchants organize the first non-importation effort in protest of the Sugar Act.
March 22, 1765 ...............................Parliament passes the Stamp Act, scheduled to go into operation on November 1.
Spring 1765 .................................Upon hearing news of the Stamp Act, colonists begin to protest; James Otis, John Adams, and Patrick Henry each make public statements against the act; colonists form groups known as the Sons of Liberty.
August 14, 1765 ..............................Sons of Liberty in Boston hang an effigy of the stamp collector (Andrew Oliver) from a tree; he resigns the next day.
August 26, 1765 ..................................Sons of Liberty trash and burn the house of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson.
March 18, 1766 ...............................Parliament repeals the Stamp Act and passes the Declaratory Bill.
June 29, 1767 .................................Parliament authorizes the Townshend Acts and creates the American Board of Customs Commissioners, to be housed in Boston, where British customs officials (who arrived in November) would be based.
January 20, 1768 .............................Lord Hillsborough becomes the secretary of state for the North American colonies, the first time the British have tried to organize the administration of American affairs in a single office.
March 1768 .................................Parliament creates four vice-admiralty courts, to be based in Halifax, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston.
June 10, 1768 .................................British officials seize John Hancock’s Liberty. Bostonians soon riot in protest, prompting British troops to be ordered to the city; they arrive on October 1.
August 1, 1769 ...............................Thomas Hutchinson becomes governor of Massachusetts.
December 1769 .............................The British, with Lord North as prime minister, decide to repeal all the Townshend duties except for the duty on tea.
March 5, 1770 .................................The Boston Massacre leads to five deaths; Paul Revere’s engraving of the act becomes the most effective form of propaganda to date for the resistance to British
acts. In early December, six soldiers are acquitted in a Boston court and two others are convicted of manslaughter.

September 1771...............................In response to a request from Samuel Adams, the Town Meeting in Boston establishes Committees of Correspondence.

June 10, 1772 ...............................The British *Gaspee* runs aground off Providence; locals row the crew to shore, then burn the ship.

March 2, 1773 ...............................Virginians create a committee of correspondence in response to the *Gaspee* incident in Rhode Island.

May 10, 1773 ...............................Parliament authorizes the Tea Act in an effort to boost the fortunes of the East India Company; provisions of the act specify that tea contracts would be awarded to consignees, at least some of whom are political favorites.

December 16, 1773 .........................Sons of Liberty in Boston, dressed as Native Americans, dump 90,000 pounds of tea into Boston Harbor, in what becomes known as the “Boston Tea Party.”

January–June 1774..........................Parliament passes the Coercive or Intolerable Acts to punish the people of Boston and Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party: The Boston Port Act (March 31) closes the port; the Massachusetts Government Act (May 20) reorganizes the administration of the colony; the Administration of Justice Act (May 20) authorizes trials for colonists to take place outside the province; the Quartering Act (June 2) allows British soldiers to seize unoccupied buildings in Massachusetts; the Quebec Act (June 22) threatens Protestants in New England by enabling the government of Quebec to have control of western lands.

June 17, 1774 ...............................Even before news of the final acts has reached Massachusetts, colonists in Boston put out a call for a congress to meet to address the crisis.

September 5, 1774...........................The First Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia and, in October, establishes the Association to enforce non-importation of British goods.

October 7, 1774..............................John Hancock becomes the head of the provincial Committee of Safety.

April 18, 1775 .................................Paul Revere and William Dawes ride into the countryside to warn of the British advance on Lexington.

April 19, 1775...............................Revolutionary War begins with shots fired at Lexington and Concord.

May 10, 1775 ...............................The Second Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia; that same day, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold take Fort Ticonderoga.

June 17, 1775 ...............................Battle of Bunker Hill.

July 6, 1775 .................................Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms.

January 1776 ...............................Tom Paine publishes *Common Sense*; it becomes an immediate sensation.

March 17, 1776 ...............................The British evacuate Boston and head toward New York; 10,000 troops take Staten Island on July 2.

May 10, 1776 ...............................Congress authorizes states to establish new forms of government.

July 4, 1776 .................................Members of Congress sign the Declaration of Independence.

August 27, 1776 .............................The British defeat the Continental Army at Long Island; under the command of William Howe, the British subsequently take New York and New Jersey and defeat the Continental Army again, on October 28, at White Plains.

September 21, 1776..........................A fire destroys about one-fourth of the buildings in New York City.

December 26, 1776 .........................Washington crosses the Delaware, capturing 1,000 British soldiers at Trenton.

January 3, 1777..............................Washington launches a raid on Princeton, driving the British back to New York.
July–October 1777.................Howe leads a British campaign up the Chesapeake toward Philadelphia, which he occupies after defeating the Continental Army at Brandywine (on September 11) and Germantown (on October 4).

October 17, 1777.....................Burgoyne surrenders to Gates at Saratoga, signaling the end of the British campaign in the North.

December 1777........................Washington and his troops establish their winter camp at Valley Forge.

February 6, 1778.....................France signs the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, supporting the Americans against the British; Spain subsequently enters the war as an ally of France. The British reorganize their military campaign and direct their energies toward the South.

March to June 1780.................At least 188 Massachusetts towns respond to request to ratify the state constitution; the constitution becomes law at the end of October. The ratification process becomes a model for subsequent state constitutions.

February 27, 1781...................The Articles of Confederation become the official form of government once Maryland agrees, the last state to do so.

October 18, 1781.....................Cornwallis, unable to escape the siege of Yorktown, surrenders, effectively ending the British military effort in North America, though troops remain until 1783.

April 12, 1782.........................Negotiations to end the conflict begin in Paris.

September 3, 1783...................Treaty ends the Revolutionary War.

November 25, 1783..................The last British forces leave New York.

December 23, 1783.................Washington goes to Congress, meeting in Annapolis, and resigns his commission.


August 1786.........................Shays’ Rebellion breaks out in western Massachusetts.

September 1786......................Delegates from the states who had traveled to Annapolis to revise the Articles of Confederation decide they will meet the following year in Philadelphia to continue the effort.

January 1787.........................Shays’ Rebellion continues with an attack on the Springfield federal arsenal.

May 25, 1787.........................The meeting, which becomes the Constitutional Convention, opens in Philadelphia; on September 17, it ends, submitting the U.S. Constitution to the states for ratification.

July 13, 1787.........................Northwest Ordinance enacted by the Continental Congress.

December 1787......................Delaware (December 7), Pennsylvania (December 12), and New Jersey (December 18) ratify the Constitution.

January–July 1788.................Georgia (January 9), Massachusetts (February 6), Maryland (April 28), South Carolina (May 23), New Hampshire (June 21), Virginia (June 25), and New York (July 26) ratify the Constitution.

April 1789.........................The Electoral College chooses George Washington as president and John Adams as vice president.

September 1789.....................Congress passes the Judiciary Act, establishing the federal court system.

May 29, 1790.........................Rhode Island is the last state to ratify the Constitution.

December 15, 1791...............Three-quarters of the states ratified the first 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights, to the Constitution.

1793.................................Supreme Court decides *Chisholm v. Georgia*. 

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March 4, 1797 ............................... John Adams becomes the second president of the United States and delivers his inaugural address.

1798............................................... Adams’s administration supports the Alien and Sedition Acts, which are opposed by Jefferson and Madison.

March 4, 1801 ............................... Thomas Jefferson delivers his inaugural address seeking harmony between Republicans and Federalists.
Glossary

abolition: The movement to eradicate the slavery of African-Americans.

Albany Plan: A proposal made by Benjamin Franklin in 1754 that would unite the 13 colonies but allow them to remain part of the British Empire.

amendment: An addition to a constitution that, once adopted, has the same authority as any other part of that constitution.

antifederalists: Individuals opposed to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Articles of Confederation: The first national government of the United States.

bicameral: A legislative body with two distinct parts or branches.

Bill of Rights, state: The enumeration, in different forms, of certain rights defined at the state level as needing protection from governmental intrusion.

Bill of Rights, U.S.: The first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

broadsides: A single sheet of printed paper, often posted in a public place.

checks and balances: The term used to describe the internal series of checks within the federal system of government established by the U.S. Constitution.

colonial agent: An individual living outside of the colony working for the colony’s interest; before and during the era of the Revolution, colonial agents working in London tried to minimize or deter any legislation that might threaten the well-being of the colony.

colonist: An individual inhabiting territory possessed by a nation and (in normal times) pledging obedience to the ruler of that nation.

Committees of Correspondence and Safety: Extralegal groups within the colonies that took it upon themselves to organize the resistance movement and, at times, to take over the actions of governing bodies.

Constitution, British: The sum total of the acts of the king and Parliament and the powers animating them. Sometimes called the “unwritten constitution,” because it cannot be found in a single place.

constitution, state: The fundamental laws of the separate states, authorized by an act of the Second Continental Congress on May 10, 1776. These documents represented efforts by each state to describe the organization of its government and typically included bills of rights.

Constitution, U.S.: Drafted in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787 and ratified by nine states by 1789, this is the “supreme law of the land” in the United States.

Declaration of Independence: The document signed by representatives of the 13 British mainland colonies south of Canada, expressing their belief in the right to govern themselves and enumerating the crimes of King George III, who is defined in the document as a tyrant.

factions: The term used to refer to a specific group of individuals motivated toward political action for their own ends. The term figured prominently in the debate about the U.S. Constitution and became one of the primary subjects of Federalist No. 10, written by James Madison.


Federalist Party: the group of individuals who coalesced around George Washington and John Adams in the 1790s; they supported a powerful federal government and such policies as the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

federalists: Individuals who supported the ratification of the United States Constitution after the Philadelphia convention of 1787.

House of Commons: The branch of the British Parliament that represented the people and contributed, according to 18th-century political theory, “virtue” to the governing system. Members of the House of Commons were elected.
**House of Lords:** The upper house of Parliament, which represented the landed aristocracy and contributed, according to 18th-century political theory, “wisdom” to the governing system. Members of the House of Lords were appointed, and many inherited their seats.

**House of Representatives, U.S.:** The lower house of the federal government, in which individuals are elected for two-year terms.

**judicial review:** The idea, finally established in the United States with the decision of *Marbury v. Madison* of 1803, that courts had the authority to rule on constitutional questions.

**Judiciary Act of 1789:** Congressional action, taken according to provisions in the U.S. Constitution, establishing the federal court system.

**Loyalist:** An individual who remained loyal to the king of England during (and, for many, after) the American Revolution.

**Magna Carta:** An act of 1215 binding the king of England into a system of laws, with subjects guaranteed certain liberties.

**manumission:** The act of freeing a slave.

**Navigation Acts:** Parliamentary legislation to regulate and tax the movement of goods within the British Empire, including the shipment of goods from the mainland North American colonies to ports in the Caribbean and Europe.

**pacification:** The term used to summarize the British military approach to the Revolutionary War, especially in the South, where the British hoped to quell the resistance movement.

**pamphlet:** A quickly produced and normally inexpensive short book; often used, as during the American Revolution, to express political ideas and arguments.

**Parliament:** The term for the House of Commons and the House of Lords, which together, along with the king, rule Britain and its overseas possessions.

**party:** A collection of individuals who seek political advantage by working together. Parties were in their formative stage during the 1790s.

**petition:** The document produced by individuals, in this era typically colonists, and sent to representatives with the expectation that those with political authority will be responsive to the will of the people as expressed in the petition.

**philosophe:** A French individual associated with the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment; philosophes were particularly prominent during the 18th century.

**Republican mother:** The ideological position of a free woman after the Revolution, who was to maintain a virtuous household so that her husband and sons would possess the virtue necessary to sustain the fledgling republic.

**Senate, U.S.:** The upper house of the federal government, in which individuals serve six-year terms.

**Sons of Liberty:** The first and most prominent extralegal assemblage of colonists, who worked together to overturn (through reason or intimidation) acts of Parliament they believed were dangerous to their liberty.

**standing army:** An army in peacetime, often seen as dangerous by those who feared the power of the state.

**statute:** An act of a legislative body, which by definition, could be overturned by a subsequent legislative body possessing the same powers as the group that authorized it.

**tyrant:** A ruler who acted despotically and denied his subjects their rights.

**unicameral:** A governing system with only one legislative branch.

**veto:** The ability of an executive to vacate a legislative act.

**writ of assistance:** A generalized form of search warrant, allowing British officials to look for contraband wherever they suspected it might be found. Such writs needed to be reauthorized within six months of the death of a monarch.
Biographical Notes

Adams, Abigail (1744–1818). Primarily known as the wife of John Adams, Abigail Adams was among the most articulate letter writers of the Revolutionary age. Her letters to her husband spoke directly to the issues of gender-based inequality that continued to exist at the time of the Revolution. She believed that the best time to alter historic discrimination toward women was during this period of political ferment, letting her husband know that all men would act as tyrants to their spouses if they had the opportunity. She did not explicitly seek full political rights for women, but she did seek increased educational opportunities.

Adams, John (1735–1826). Trained as a lawyer, Adams played a central role in the resistance movement from its earliest years in Massachusetts. Despite his sympathy for the incipient rebellion, he defended the British soldiers accused of perpetrating the Boston Massacre. He served in the First and Second Continental Congress, was an outspoken advocate for independence from Britain, and became a diplomat abroad during the Revolutionary War; he was also a principal author of the Massachusetts state constitution. Adams served as Washington’s vice president before becoming president in 1796. His administration authorized the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798, but those statutes became unenforceable with the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800. He died on July 4, 1826, the same day as Jefferson and the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Adams, Samuel (1722–1803). Samuel Adams was one of the earliest and most vocal proponents of the resistance movement in Boston. He was a member of the Sons of Liberty, among other groups active in the rebellion. He was instrumental in the establishment of Boston’s first Committee of Correspondence in 1772 and ran the Boston Town Meeting that ended shortly before the Boston Tea Party. After the Revolution, he remained a public figure and advocated harsh punishment for those involved in Shays’ Rebellion.

Burgoyne, John (1722–1792). A British military official best known in America for his participation in the ill-fated campaign to divide the resistance in 1777. Burgoyne arrived back in the colonies (he had been there earlier but without his leadership position) in 1777 with instructions to lead a contingent from Canada south toward Albany. There, he was scheduled to meet Sir William Howe, who was to have led his forces northward from Philadelphia. But Burgoyne’s campaign was mired in trouble, and by the time he faced the American general Horatio Gates at Saratoga, he stood little chance of victory. He surrendered his forces there, as well as himself. The Americans released him in 1778, and he returned to London, where he became a member of the Parliamentary opposition to the American war.

Dickinson, John (1732–1808). John Dickinson, trained as a lawyer, played a crucial role in the formation of the resistance movement. He was present at the Stamp Act Congress in New York in 1765. His Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, which he wrote to protest the Townshend duties, was widely reprinted in the late 1760s. Yet despite his views, Dickinson, who was a member of the Continental Congress, opposed the Declaration of Independence, fearing that such an action would lead to the defeat of the colonists. Nonetheless, Dickinson was the primary author of the Articles of Confederation.

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790). Printer, inventor, and scientist, Benjamin Franklin was the most famous American of the 18th century, with a reputation that stretched across the Atlantic Ocean. Born in Boston, Franklin moved to Philadelphia in 1723, where he rose through the ranks of colonial society on a personal journey recounted in his Autobiography. In 1754, he proposed a plan of union of the colonies at a meeting in Albany, but nothing came of that action. He went to London to work for the colony of Pennsylvania and later became the agent for three other colonies. Franklin had sought reconciliation but, instead, was humiliated by British officials and returned to Philadelphia to serve in the Second Continental Congress, before returning to Europe on a diplomatic mission to seek an alliance with France. Replaced in 1785 by Thomas Jefferson, Franklin returned to Philadelphia in time for the Constitutional Convention, where he delivered the final speech, which was then widely distributed.

George III (1738–1820). George III was 22 years old when he became king after the death of his grandfather. Almost immediately, he shook up the coalition that had surrounded the court and tried to exert more active control over the ministry, an effort that led to instability at the highest levels of the British administration during the 1760s. Colonists eventually held him personally responsible for ignoring their petitions, which they saw as his implication in the ministerial plot to deprive them of their liberty. He authorized the military invasion of the colonies that furthered the rebellion, believing that the loss of his American territory could be the end of the empire. On that
point, George was wrong, but his actions nonetheless caused his onetime subjects to see him as a tyrant who had committed a series of actions that justified their move toward independence.

**Hamilton, Alexander** (1757–1804). Alexander Hamilton was a young man when the Revolutionary War began, but by 1777, he had risen through the Continental Army to become an aide-de-camp to George Washington. After the war, he emerged again as a public figure in the debate over the Constitution in New York, authoring many of the essays in *The Federalist* papers, including a strong defense of the idea of the federal judiciary. He served as secretary of the treasury in Washington’s administration and was a forceful advocate for the development of the American economy, even though that action put him in opposition to Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of state, who wanted America to retain its agricultural focus. He died after suffering a mortal wound in a duel with Aaron Burr in 1804.

**Henry, Patrick** (1736–1799). Patrick Henry became a member of the House of Burgesses in Virginia in 1765, just in time to protest the Stamp Act. From that moment forward, he became a leader of the resistance to British rule. Famous for his long speeches (and for purportedly stating, “Give me liberty or give me death,” though scholars cannot prove that he actually said that), Henry was a frequent advocate for his state, which rewarded him by making him its first governor after independence. His belief in the importance of state power and sovereignty led him to become one of the most outspoken and articulate of the antifederalists.

**Howe, Sir William** (1729–1814). William Howe was the commander-in-chief of British forces in America from the start of the Revolutionary War until he resigned in 1777 in the wake of the disastrous northern campaign that had led to the surrender of John Burgoyne. Howe typically commanded forces that were better trained and armed than the Continental Army, yet he never pressed his advantage. After he returned to Britain, he was accused of running a “sentimental” kind of war, incapable of delivering the kind of devastating blow that could destroy the Continental Army. Rather than dismissing Howe as an inferior military leader, it is better to understand him as a commander who knew that if he turned his troops loose, he might prevail on the battlefield but lose the battle for the hearts and minds of the American people.

**Hutchinson, Thomas** (1711–1780). Trained as a lawyer, Thomas Hutchinson rose through the provincial establishment, eventually becoming governor in 1771. But during the rebellion, his loyalty led him to become the most despised man in Massachusetts. Stamp Act rioters destroyed his house in 1765, even though Hutchinson himself was an opponent of the act but felt that as a provincial official, he had to enforce it. He left Massachusetts in 1774 and traveled to England. There, on July 4, 1776, he received an honorary degree at Oxford for his service to the empire.

**Jefferson, Thomas** (1743–1826). Best known for being the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson was also a farmer, public official, and primary founder of the University of Virginia. During the war, Jefferson was governor of Virginia (1779–1781), and after it ended, he served in Congress (1783–1784) before representing the United States in France (1785–1789), where he learned about the social problems caused by long-term maldistribution of wealth. After he returned, he continued to serve the public, as Washington’s secretary of state and John Adams’s vice president, before his election to the presidency in 1800. Jefferson became an advocate of the expansion of the nation with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which supported his vision of an economy and society dominated by freeholders. His Statute for Religious Freedom, which he wrote in 1777, became established in law in 1786.

**Madison, James** (1751–1836). Madison, who would eventually become the fourth president of the United States (following Jefferson), rose to prominence, not during the resistance movement, but instead, during the discussion of a new plan for a national government. He attended the meeting in Annapolis in 1786 to revise the Articles of Confederation but made his mark in Philadelphia the next year when he shaped what became known as the Virginia Plan, which laid out much of what emerged in the U.S. Constitution. He then played a determining role in the debate over the Constitution as the most important of the three authors of *The Federalist* papers. As a promise to others who feared the lack of any clear statement protecting individual rights, Madison became the primary architect of the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, now known as the Bill of Rights. Later in the decade, he used the constitutional ideas he had championed to battle the Alien and Sedition Acts.

**Otis, James** (1725–1783). James Otis, a rising star in the Anglo-American judicial establishment, turned down an opportunity to be the king’s advocate general of the Boston-based vice-admiralty court when his father, known as Col. James Otis, was passed over for a seat on the province’s supreme court. He soon took a case defending a group...
of merchants who wanted to avoid having their ships searched. The Writs of Assistance case thrust Otis into the spotlight of the incipient resistance movement, where he remained as a member of the Massachusetts general court and the author of pamphlets decrying purported British violations of colonists’ rights. By the late 1760s, however, Otis began to suffer periods of insanity, which limited his role as a public figure until his death, reportedly from a bolt of lightning in 1783.

**Paine, Thomas** (1737–1809). An English-born failed artisan, Paine arrived in Philadelphia in late November 1774 and quickly became involved in the resistance movement. Fourteen months later, he published *Common Sense*, which immediately became the most celebrated and widely read pamphlet of the pre-independence period. During the war, Paine continued to write, putting his efforts toward *The American Crisis*, which appeared in 1779. In 1787, he returned to England and, eventually, to political writing with his *Rights of Man*, published in 1791 and 1792 in response to British criticism of the French Revolution. Paine moved to France, published *The Age of Reason*, served a stint in the Luxembourg Prison, and finally returned to the United States in 1802, where he faded from public view on a farm in New Rochelle, New York. He died there in 1809.

**Warren, Mercy Otis** (1728–1814). As the sister of James Otis, it was perhaps not surprising that Mercy Otis Warren would take the side of the resistance in the move toward independence. But she achieved fame as the author of one of the earliest accounts of the *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*, which was published in three volumes in 1805. Though she was also a playwright, having written *The Adulateur* in 1773 and *The Group* in 1775, she is best known for the vigorous and highly charged prose of her *History*. Like other historical writers of her age, she often focused on the personalities of those involved and created a devastating portrait of Thomas Hutchinson.

**Washington, George** (1732–1799). Washington first emerged on the public scene as a young military officer in the run-up to what became the Seven Years’ War, but he found lasting fame as the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, which he led through virtually the entire war. His letters to Congress during the war provided both progress reports and included repeated requests for supplies. He kept the army together during its darkest days, when the British defeated his forces around New York and again at Brandywine and Germantown before the gloomy winter at Valley Forge. But Washington was capable of great military strokes, too, none more famous than his raids on Trenton and Princeton. When the last British soldiers finally departed New York in 1783, he went to Annapolis and resigned his commission. Six years later, he emerged as the first president of the United States and returned to private life after two terms, establishing a precedent (not yet in the Constitution) that remained in place until the 20th century.
Bibliography

Essential Reading:


Ammerman, David. *In the Common Cause: American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974. The most useful study of the emergence of the extra-legal committees that provided the infrastructure for the rebellion.

Anderson, Fred. *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766*. New York: Knopf, 2000. This monumental book considers the Seven Years’ War, often known as the French and Indian War to Americans, in its global context. It is a masterpiece of historical research.


———. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967; enlarged edition, 1992. This Pulitzer Prize–winning account is the most important single book ever written about the American Revolution and the foundational text for much of this course. No other historian has so successfully explained the sources of the ideas that propelled the Revolution forward.

———. *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974. Bailyn followed his landmark *Ideological Origins* with this study of Hutchinson, one of the most reviled figures during the period of the Revolution. The Hutchinson who emerges in this sympathetic study, which won the National Book Award, bears little resemblance to the caricatures offered by his contemporary enemies.


Bodle, Wayne K. *The Valley Forge Winter: Civilians and Soldiers in War*. University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 2002. This volume presents a detailed and poignant study of some of the darkest days faced by Washington’s army.

Brewer, John. *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. While many American historians were deep into their discussion of the American Revolution during the bicentennial, the British historian Brewer produced this account, which explained how politics actually worked at the moment when the imperial system began to fracture.

Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Calloway’s book, which consists primarily of a series of chapters focused on particular regions, demonstrates that the Revolution was not a single event for natives but, rather, an affair that was often characterized by local concerns, including preexisting relations between Indians and their neighbors.

the more provocative works produced by the bicentennial, Christie and Labaree did just that, and their book is a reminder of how one’s perspective can change depending on the angle of the historian’s vision.

Crèvecoeur, Hector St. John de. *Letters from an American Farmer*. First published in 1782; available in multiple editions. Crèvecoeur’s essays, especially his “What is an American?” have become crucial documents in our understanding of the American character in the 18th century.

Crow, Jeffrey J., and Larry E. Tise, eds. *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978. This collection of articles looks at the ways in which the Revolution altered the lives of diverse populations of southerners, including superb essays on regional political culture (by Jack P. Greene), women (by Mary Beth Norton), military strategy (by John Shy), and slavery (by Peter H. Wood).


Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency: George Washington*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Ellis uses his extraordinary talents to explain the life of Washington, a man whose history is so encrusted with myth that the individual beneath has been hard to locate.

Farrand, Max. *The Framing of the Constitution of the United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913. Though Farrand’s book is now almost a century old, it remains a superb account of the debates in the Philadelphia convention. Farrand was also the editor of the most detailed accounts of the convention (see Supplementary Reading, below).


Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography*. Edited by Louis P. Masur. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1993. Franklin’s book can be found in many editions; this edition has the benefit of including an excellent introduction and a series of images of Franklin which show the evolution in both his appearance and the ways that others understood him during his long life and career.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. This collection includes Geertz’s work on the nature of ideologies, which has shaped the way that the term is used in this course.


Greene, Jack P. *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Polities of the British Empire and the United States, 1607–1788*. New York: Norton, 1986. In this study of political culture across the British Empire, Greene shows that it is crucial to set American developments into a wider context, even when American historical forces seem to be *sui generis*. 


Hamilton, Alexander, John Jay, and James Madison. *The Federalist*. Edited by Jacob E. Cooke. First published as a series of articles signed by “Publius” as part of the debate on the Constitution in the state of New York, *The Federalist* papers were soon published as a book and have probably been in print ever since. There are many editions now available of this fundamental text, which is frequently assigned in classes and has been cited numerous times in court decisions. This definitive edition includes excellent notes explaining key portions of the text.

Hinderaker, Eric, and Peter C. Mancall. *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. In this study of the colonial hinterland, Hinderaker and Mancall argue that many of the problems of the 1760s arose because of British efforts to exert control over the American backcountry.


Kammen, Michael. *A Rope of Sand: The Colonial Agents, British Politics, and the American Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968. This is a vibrant study of the individuals who played a crucial role in maintaining communication between London and the mainland colonies. As Kammen demonstrates, colonial agents were crucial in the workings of an often precarious political system.


Kerber, Linda. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1980. This is a landmark book that illuminates the ways in which the Revolution altered the lives of women. Kerber put forward the concept of the “republican mother,” which has been widely embraced by other scholars.

Kurtz, Stephen G., and James H. Hutson, eds. *Essays on the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1973. As the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence approached, many scholars turned their attention to issues raised by the Revolution. This volume, the product of a symposium in 1971, brings together some of the leading scholars of that age; the papers they produced remain central to our understanding of the era.

Locke, John. *Two Treatises on Government*. Edited by Ian Shapiro. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. Locke’s *Two Treatises* has been reprinted many times, a sign of the importance of his views to all subsequent discussions about the nature of the state and its relation to those who live within it. Though Locke wrote in the late seventeenth century, his views had a powerful effect on the American revolutionaries. This edition has the benefit of including his “Letter Concerning Toleration.”

Maier, Pauline. *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*. New York: Knopf, 1997. Maier, whose study of the opposition to England propelled her into the front ranks of Revolutionary historians, has here written a penetrating analysis of the most sacred text in the American canon. A detailed account about the processes through which the Declaration of Independence emerged and then became a crucial document in American history.
and culture. As in her other work, the great strength of this book lies in Maier’s deep immersion into the kinds of primary source materials that give life to long-dead and often obscure historical actors.


Marshall, P. J., ed. The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. By providing a comprehensive picture of the entire empire during the 18th century, the essays in this volume help situate the American movement for independence into a larger British world. Excellent essays touch on the far-flung parts of the empire and include several that are directly about the American scene.

Morgan, Edmund S. Benjamin Franklin. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. Morgan’s biography of Franklin is based entirely on his reading of the luminary’s papers, which he places in the context of his deep understanding of early American history. The book is frequently poignant and allows Franklin to speak for himself across the centuries.


Paine, Thomas. Common Sense and Related Writings. Edited by Thomas Slaughter. Boston: Bedford Books/St. Martin's Press, 2001. First published in 1776; available in many editions. Paine needs to be read to be understood, and all modern readers should celebrate the fact that his words can be found easily. More than 200 years later, Common Sense still has the capacity to shock.

Rakove, Jack. The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress. New York: Knopf, 1979. Rakove dug deep into the records of the first national government to produce this book, the most thorough and persuasive of any account of the rise of the national government, primarily in the 1770s.


Stone, Geoffrey R. Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1789 to the War on Terrorism. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004. Stone’s remarkable and chilling book demonstrates how the federal government has often believed it necessary to curtail free speech in times of crisis. His account serves as a warning that individual liberties have often been limited and difficult to recover.

Taafee, Stephen R. *The Philadelphia Campaign, 1777–1778.* Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2003. This richly detailed portrait of the Philadelphia region during the decisive year of 1777–1778 shows the kinds of insights that historians can have if they turn their attention to localities in times of crisis.


Warren, Mercy Otis. *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution.* Two volumes. Boston, 1805; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988. Warren was among the first historians to consider the American Revolution as a historical event, and her account breathes life into countless Revolutionary figures, many of whom she knew personally. The modern reprint of this book was a great boon to readers interested in the writing of history in the Revolutionary age.

Wood, Gordon. *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin.* New York: Viking, 2004. This is a superb study of Franklin, the most famous American of the 18th century. Wood’s focus on the process whereby Franklin became an international symbol of Americans, then contemplated life in Europe, and finally embraced his homeland is filled with fascinating details.


———. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution.* New York: Knopf, 1992. Wood’s successful follow-up to his study of the process of constitution-writing, this book emphasizes the changes in the ways that Americans understood—and addressed—each other. Wood makes a compelling case that the “radicalism” of the Revolution should not be sought in social or economic changes but, instead, in the creation of a democratic society out of a monarchical heritage.


Supplementary Reading:


Appleby, Joyce. *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s.* New York: New York University Press, 1984. This brief study provides crucial details about the first decade of the new republic, with particular attention to the ways that Americans wrestled with the legacy of the Revolution.


Bailyn, Bernard. *Faces of Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence.* New York: Knopf, 1990. This book brings together some of Bailyn’s most important individual essays, including insightful portraits of crucial Revolutionary figures, such as Thomas Hutchinson, John Adams, and Thomas Paine, as well as a Massachusetts artisan named Harbottle Dorr who annotated Boston’s newspapers.

Bailyn, Bernard, ed. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750–1765.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965. The pamphlets in this vital collection are crucial components in Bailyn’s study of the origins of the Revolution. The book would be listed under Essential Reading, but it is now out of print; however, it is available at better libraries.

Early American History and Culture, 1987. Just as historians had gathered together to contemplate the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1976, they did so again in preparation for the 200th birthday of the U.S. Constitution. This collection brings together thoughtful pieces not only about the Constitution itself but about American culture at the time.


Carp, E. Wayne. To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775–1783. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. Carp’s study discusses the fact that the Continental Army often had inadequate resources even while the fate of the independence movement relied on its abilities to win against a better-armed opponent.


Colley, Linda. Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992. A fascinating study of the British state in the generations leading up to and then following the American Revolution, with remarkable passages about the domestic career and reputation of George III.


Horwitz, Morton J. *The Transformation of American Law, 1780–1860.* Cambridge, Mass.: 1977. Though this study is not focused on the Revolution itself, it reveals the ways in which the legal system created by the Revolution fostered economic development in the early American Republic.


Jameson, J. Franklin. *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926. This venerable study, which should be in any decent library, remains a classic analysis of the social and economic dimensions of the Revolution.


Jensen, Merrill, ed. *English Historical Documents, volume IX: American Colonial Documents to 1776.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955. Jensen’s volume, no longer in print but available in good libraries, was part of a series of English documents put out by Oxford. It remains, 50 years after it was published, an almost unparalleled source for primary materials, especially the text of important acts and state papers. If this book were still in print, it would be listed under Essential Reading, above.


Mancall, Peter C. *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995. This study of the role of alcohol in the fur and deerskin trades shows how intercultural trade shaped native communities, often to the detriment of the Indians.

Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991. This study focuses on one extensive hinterland through the era of the Revolution and shows how the political movement and the changes it produced influenced life in the backcountry.


McCoy, Drew R. The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. A poignant study not only of Madison but by some who followed him and tried to understand the nation that the Revolution had brought into existence.


Merrell, James H. The Indians’ New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1989. Merrell’s study of the Catawbas remains among the most significant efforts to understand how any native people coped with colonialism and, in this instance, how the Revolution shaped the fates of Indians who remained in the East.


Nash, Gary B. The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America. New York: Viking, 2005. In this richly detailed volume, Nash brings to life the stories of many Americans in the age of the Revolution who have been overlooked by other historians. As he suggests, radicalism could be found in many locales from the 1760s through the 1780s.


Peterson, Merrill D. Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1976. This brief but penetrating study explores relations between two of the most important and well-documented of the Founders.

Plumb, J. H. The First Four Georges. London: Batsford, 1956; reprint, London: Fontana/Collins, 1966. Plumb tried to rescue the reputations of these Hanoverians by portraying “these Georges as human beings caught in exceptional
circumstances.” Fifty years after he wrote his brief book, his reflections—especially on George III—remain worthwhile.


Schiff, Stacy. *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America*. New York: Holt, 2005. This recent biography of Franklin, one of a number generated by scholars on the approach of the tercentenary of Franklin’s birth, concentrates on Franklin’s time in France during the war for independence.

Smith, Maurice H. *The Writs of Assistance Case*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. This is a long and dense study of the legal aspects of writs of assistance, with particular attention to the case in Boston in 1761.


Tudor, William. *The Life of James Otis of Massachusetts*. Published in Boston in 1823, this study has unfortunately been long out of print. However, it should be possible to find it in better research libraries, and it is worth the effort because Tudor writes about Otis as a sympathetic contemporary and includes details of his life that cannot be found elsewhere.


Wallace, Anthony F. C. *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca*. New York: Knopf, 1970. Despite the explosion of works relating to Native American history, Wallace’s description of this Iroquois Nation remains a far-reaching and imminently important account of how one native people coped with—and responded to—the challenges posed by the American Revolution.


Young, Alfred F. *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*. Boston: Beacon, 1999. Young’s account of a Boston shoemaker and his later understanding of the Revolution reveals the different ways that the great political moments of the resistance movement came to shape individual lives during and after the Revolution.

**Resources Available at Subscribing Research Libraries:**

*Pennsylvania Gazette*. The complete, searchable text of the most important newspaper in the Anglo-American mainland colonies in the eighteenth century.

*Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* (known as ECCO). Includes the full text of every book or pamphlet published in England in the eighteenth century.
Evans Early American Imprints. Includes the full text of all books and pamphlets produced in the mainland Anglo-American colonies and the early United States to 1800.

Internet Resources:
The Founders' Constitution (http://press-pubs.chicago.edu/founders/). This is the most thorough site for materials relating to Constitutional history.

Avalon Project at Yale Law School (www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm). An unparalleled source for documents issued by national governments and states, including English documents dating back to Magna Carta and crucial state documents from the Revolutionary period, including state constitutions.

Adams Family Papers (www.masshist.org/digitaladams). The complete correspondence between John and Abigail Adams can be found here, along with John Adams’s Diary and his Autobiography. The correspondence between John Adams and Abigail Adams contains insights on issues large and small, including his comments during his various political positions and her observations of American life during the war and, later, as First Lady in the late 1790s.

Colonial Williamsburg (www.history.org). This site provides a virtual recreation of Williamsburg during the eighteenth century.

National Constitution Center (www.constitutioncenter.org). This site for the newly created National Constitution Center in Philadelphia provides links to many documents relating to the Founding, as well as links to sites for other aspects of the history of the most important city in the mainland Anglo-American colonies.

American Memory Project (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem). This online project of the Library of Congress presents primary sources for virtually any aspect of the American experience, with scans of over three thousand documents relating to directly to the American Revolution and its role in American culture.
Origins and Ideologies of the American Revolution
Part IV
Professor Peter C. Mancall
Peter C. Mancall, Ph.D.
Professor of History and Anthropology, University of Southern California, and
Director, USC–Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute

Peter C. Mancall, whose historical work centers on early American history, Native American history, and the history of the early modern Atlantic world, is Professor of History and Anthropology at the University of Southern California. He is also the first Director of the USC–Huntington Early Modern Studies Institute, an interdisciplinary partnership between USC and the Huntington Library in nearby San Marino, California. From 2002 to 2004, Dr. Mancall served as president of the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction, an international group of scholars who study the early modern era.

Professor Mancall has taught at the University of Southern California since 2001. After receiving his A.B. degree from Oberlin College in 1981, he went to Harvard, where he studied with Bernard Bailyn and received his Ph.D. in 1986. Before moving to Los Angeles, he was a lecturer on history and literature at Harvard and then on the faculty at the University of Kansas from 1989 to 2001, where he won two teaching awards. In 2004, he was a Gamma Sigma Alpha professor of the year at USC.


Dr. Mancall’s work has been featured on National Public Radio’s “All Things Considered” and in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and it has been reviewed in journals in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and across Europe. In 1998, after his work had come to the attention of the World Health Organization, Dr. Mancall was the inaugural ALAC Research Fellow of the Health Research Centre of New Zealand. His research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, and the American Philosophical Society, among others. He has consulted with movie studios about documentary and feature films and has been filmed for a four-part international documentary on the history of genocide. Dr. Mancall regularly consults with teachers from the Los Angeles Unified School District through the Teaching American History program and is on the editorial boards of four scholarly journals.

He lives in Los Angeles with his wife, the medieval historian Lisa Bitel, and their two children.

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Origins and Ideologies of the American Revolution

Scope:

The American Revolution was the most important event in our country’s history. What began as a protest movement against relatively minor taxes in the 1760s became by 1776 a movement for independence cloaked in the rhetoric of universal equality. By the time the new century opened, the Revolution had spawned a federal system of government and a bill of rights that remain at the heart of the United States today.

This 18th-century revolution was not based on self-interest, class conflict, or partisan politics. Instead it grew from several core ideas, all expressed to some extent in the Declaration of Independence: equality of all people, the ability to pursue one’s own path without undue government burdens, and the desire to live free of tyranny. American revolutionaries redefined the relationship between the individual and the state. After 1776, Americans were no longer subjects of a monarch. They had become sovereign citizens of a nation who granted to governments specified powers to maintain order and promote the common good.

This course emphasizes the role of ideas in the age of the American Revolution. After analyzing how ideas circulated in the American colonies and more broadly in the Atlantic world (Lecture Two), and surveying the population of the colonies and their place in the Atlantic community (Lectures Three through Five), the course moves chronologically through the major developments of the period from 1760 to 1800. The origins of the Revolution can be seen in the changes in the workings of the empire after victory in the Seven Years’ War (Lecture Six) and the shifts in British politics with the accession of King George III (Lectures Seven through Nine). The first glimmer of what became the Revolution appeared in a Boston courtroom in 1761, when the lawyer James Otis took the case of merchants who would rather smuggle goods into port than pay duties on them (Lecture Ten). From that improbable beginning, a resistance movement began to grow across the Anglo-American mainland colonies, and especially in Massachusetts.

During the early 1760s, the British government, faced with high debts from the Seven Years’ War, tried to raise funds by taxing its American colonists (Lecture Eleven). The colonists for their part protested at each stage, often expressing their concerns in pamphlets and newspaper articles that revealed a deep understanding of political theory and history. By 1765, colonists had taken to the streets to protest the Stamp Act (Lecture Twelve), prompting Parliament to repeal the odious measure but to pass new legislation declaring its unlimited right to pass legislation for the colonies (Lecture Thirteen). Over the next five years, political attitudes hardened on both sides (Lectures Fourteen and Fifteen), even as Benjamin Franklin sought ways to ease the crisis (Lecture Sixteen). In 1768, British soldiers arrived in Boston, and two years later, some of them killed five Americans in the so-called “Boston Massacre,” an event that quickly took on unprecedented notoriety through rebels’ efforts to publicize it (Lecture Seventeen).

By the middle of the 1770s, colonists and the British, despite many efforts by both sides to reduce tensions, were at war (Lectures Eighteen through Twenty-Two). Common Sense, a pamphlet by the recent immigrant Thomas Paine, became the widest circulated political tract of its time despite, or perhaps because of, prose so inflammatory that even the revolutionary John Adams questioned its validity (Lecture Twenty-Three). Soon after its publication, the British moved their base of operations from Boston to New York, where they remained until the end of the war (Lecture Twenty-Four).

It was not until July 1776 that the colonists, having reached the conclusion that George III was a tyrant, made a formal declaration of their desire to be a separate nation (Lecture Twenty-Five). Even then there was no consensus on the part of Americans about what the “United States” would look like. As war spread through eastern North America, military hostilities became a form of political education for Americans, who soon became all-too-familiar with epochal scenes of a nascent national drama. Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill, Princeton, Trenton, Saratoga, and Valley Forge all entered the consciousness of the American people (Lectures Twenty-Six and Twenty-Seven). In the midst of reports of battles against a far more powerful army, supported by the strongest Atlantic fleet of its time, ordinary Americans also learned about the ideas that motivated and sustained the movement for independence.

During the war Americans, who were not even sure they would emerge victorious, set about to create their own governments. They began at the state level, drafting constitutions intended to become fundamental laws. These constitutions laid out how governments were to operate and explained why such governments were legitimate expressions of the will of the people (Lecture Twenty-Eight). At the same time Thomas Jefferson drafted a statute
for religious freedom for Virginia, a state act that remains perhaps the most significant legislation of the founding era (Lecture Twenty-Nine). Some Americans also began work on plans for a national government, though that remained a secondary concern until the war ended. Despite an alliance with France (Lecture Thirty) and the creation of a plan for a national government (Lecture Thirty-One), the war ground on until the British surrender at Yorktown (Lecture Thirty-Two) and the signing of the peace treaty in Paris in 1783 (Lecture Thirty-Three).

The end of the war did not solve the new nation’s problems. During the 1780s, the United States faced a series of crises (Lecture thirty-four) and slavery remained a dominant social and economic institution throughout the south despite the fact that its continued existence stood in stark contrast to central ideals of the Revolution (Lecture Thirty-Five). By the middle of the 1780s, discussion about the need for a better organized national system led to the calling of what became the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 (Lecture Thirty-Six). Those in attendance tried to devise a system that would recognize the sovereignty of each state while at the same time forging a union that would bring them together. When leaders of that congress finally produced a document, Americans entered into the most sustained debate about the nature of power in their history. Their discussion produced brilliant assessments of human character and ideas about the ways to control personal ambition for the good of the whole. Many thoughtful Americans, including some who had battled against the British, believed that the Constitution was a recipe for the rise of a new kind of tyrant. But the document was ratified because its proponents, including the authors of The Federalist papers, devised rhetoric sufficient to assuage reasonable fears. Nonetheless, by the early 1790s even James Madison, the primary architect of the Constitution, recognized the need for a series of amendments known as the Bill of Rights, which provided further protection for individuals against government abuses (Lectures Thirty-Eight through Forty).

The greatest documents of the Revolutionary age—the Declaration of Independence, the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, and the Constitution with its Bill of Rights—spoke a universal language. These statements of political ideals and American identity pointed to a bright national future. Few could have anticipated the political struggles that subsequently divided Americans during the 1790s (Lectures Forty-One and Forty-Two), but the election of 1800 (Lecture Forty-Three) demonstrated that the system created by the Revolution could withstand the shift from one political party to another. By then it was clear that the rebellion had a mixed legacy; neither Native Americans nor women were able to share in its benefits at the time, nor did it lead to the equalization of property in the society (Lectures Forty-Four through Forty-Six). The Revolution’s immediate effects could be seen in the views of some of those who lived through it and provided posterity with descriptions of how it changed American society (Lecture Forty-Seven). Despite its limitations, the Revolution established an ideology of expansive liberty, which Americans turned to in virtually all later efforts to improve their condition (Lecture Forty-Eight). We continue to do so today.
Lecture Thirty-Seven
The United States Constitution

Scope: The compromises of the convention found final expression in the U.S. Constitution, which was signed by 39 of those who attended the meeting. The Constitution created a far stronger national government than had existed earlier and, within that government, a very robust executive branch, in which the president had the kinds of powers that the first state constitution writers thought were dangerous. Some provisions in the federal Constitution mirrored parts of the state documents, such as the method for ratifying the document by sending it to the states, an idea first proposed in the Massachusetts constitution of 1780. The Founders sorted out the problems of large and small states by giving them different weight in the two houses of the federal legislature. The legacy of the initial rebellion and the war itself also found expression in the Constitution, forever reminding Americans that it was a government created by a group of revolutionaries and their ideological heirs. Specific clauses of the Constitution reflected prevailing ideological concerns of the Revolutionary generation. The enumeration in Article I, section 8, of the powers of Congress put limits on the authority of the central government at the same time that it carved out the appropriate areas for its actions. The Constitution carefully laid out the relation among the branches of the federal government, including the conditional presidential veto power. The Founders knew that their document would need to evolve in response to changing circumstances. They thus built into it explicit provisions for how it could be amended.

Outline

I. The U.S. Constitution must be understood as the product of a relatively small group of Americans wrestling with two distinct ideological traditions.
   A. A government was needed that would support the ideological triumph of the resistance movement.
   B. The text reflected the specific problems faced by the United States in the 1780s, including problems that those who supported independence in 1776 could not have anticipated.

II. Article I of the U.S. Constitution laid out the operations and powers of the two houses of the federal legislature.
   A. It specified the method by which members of each house were to be elected and the rules for eligibility.
      1. It laid out rules for apportioning taxes and counting population for representation, including the so-called “three-fifths rule.”
      2. The number of representatives in the House was based on population, but each state had equal representation in the Senate.
   B. Section 2 laid out the powers of each house in cases of impeachment.
      1. The House would have the power to impeach an official.
      2. The Senate had the authority to try impeachment cases.
   C. Section 8 detailed the specific powers that Congress possessed.
      1. Congress could tax Americans directly.
      2. Congress had the power to declare war, raise armies, and summon the militia to suppress insurrections.
   D. Section 9, among other things, prohibited Congress from eliminating the slave trade until 1808.
   E. Article X limited states’ authority in international affairs and prevented them from forming alliances with each other.

III. Article II established a powerful executive branch.
   A. Section 1 established the procedures for electing the president.
      1. It created the Electoral College and specified how it should function.
      2. It imposed a citizenship requirement on the president.
   B. Section 2 established the president as the commander-in-chief.
      1. This part of the Constitution guaranteed civilian command over the military.
2. The president had the authority to make treaties and appoint federal judges but only with the advice and consent of the Senate.

C. Section 3 mandated that the president deliver periodic addresses to Congress describing “the state of the Union.”

D. Section 4 identified the crimes for which the president and “all civil officers of the United States” could be removed from office.

IV. The remainder of the Constitution established the framework for the rest of the federal government and the procedure for ratification and amendments.

A. Article III established the Supreme Court and gave the federal government the authority to establish inferior federal courts.

B. Article IV regulated relations among the states.
   1. It maintained the “full faith and credit” clause of the Articles of Confederation.
   2. It demanded the return of fugitive slaves.
   3. It established rules for the admission of new states.
   4. It guaranteed to each state “a republican form of government.”

C. Article V established the procedure for amending the U.S. Constitution.

D. Article VI defined the Constitution as the “supreme law of the land.”

E. Article VII outlined the procedure for ratification.

V. The contents of the Constitution revealed the legacy of the Revolution in specific ways.

A. By sending the Constitution back to the states for ratification, the Founders recognized that only the people could create fundamental law.

B. The system recognized the prior sovereignty of the states.

C. By including a process for amending the Constitution, the Founders recognized the limits of their abilities.

**Essential Reading:**
Max Farrand, *The Framing of the Constitution.*
U.S. Constitution.

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. Did the Constitution address the most important public issues of the 1780s?
2. What specific elements of the resistance movement can be seen in this plan for a national government?
Lecture Thirty-Eight
The Antifederalist Critique

Scope: When the Constitution went to the states in preparation for ratifying conventions, it immediately ran into trouble. Across the new nation, thoughtful observers, including many who had played prominent roles in the struggle against the British, believed that it would create a national government no better than that of Britain. Critics, who became known as *antifederalists*, feared the power of the president and lambasted those who thought that his powers to pardon would not be misused. They regretted the lack of a council to hold him in check and his abilities to veto acts of legislation. They reserved their greatest ire for what they believed was the most serious problem: the lack of a bill of rights protecting individuals from the states. The idea of a bill of rights was old and derived from the British Constitution. Some of the state constitutions had included enumerations of certain rights; others did not. But none of the state constitutions created governments with the coercive powers that the U.S. Constitution granted to the federal government. Given its extraordinary powers, the lack of a bill of rights signaled to the antifederalists that some people would gain power and use it to deprive others of their rights, including their right to keep their own property. They worried that their Revolutionary achievement would be erased in a counterrevolution.

Outline

I. As soon as the Constitution was prepared, it faced opposition.
   A. Some of those present in Philadelphia refused to sign it.
      1. They believed that the convention had gone beyond its original plan.
      2. They specifically objected to the fact that the Constitution could become law with ratification by only nine states, a clear departure from the precedent set by the Articles of Confederation.
   B. Those who opposed it organized efforts to derail the ratification process.
      1. They believed that the Constitution represented a defeat for the core principles of the Revolution itself.
      2. They used newspapers and pamphlets to spread their critique of the document.
      3. The antifederalists took their case to the ratifying conventions in the states.
   C. Two of the most important of the antifederalists were George Mason, who attended the Philadelphia convention but would not sign the Constitution, and one known as “Agrippa,” who was, in all likelihood, James Winthrop of Massachusetts.
   D. Mercy Otis Warren also protested the Constitution, believing that the argument put forward in its defense would hide the fact that the new form of government would “undermine all the barriers of freedom.”

II. The Constitution was, the antifederalists argued, dangerous because it lacked a bill of rights.
   A. Some but not all states had included such bills in their state constitutions.
   B. The government created with the Constitution had enormous powers, which could be used to suppress individual rights.

III. The antifederalists believed that there was no protection of state laws or state bills of rights.
   A. They argued that the U.S. Constitution made federal laws superior to state laws.
   B. They did not embrace the modern idea of *federalism*, in which state and national governments each represented the interests of the people.

IV. The antifederalists also feared the power of the president.
   A. Without a council to advise him, he would surround himself with sycophants who might shield him from information he needed to know.
   B. They believed that the pardoning power in Article II would allow the president to protect himself by exonerating individuals with whom he had committed a crime.
V. The antifederalists believed that the federal government would be unable to govern an extended republic.
   A. Holding to a widely held maxim, they believed that a republican form of government could survive only in a small state where most individuals had a common interest.
   B. A large state would logically have people with very different interests, who would battle each other for preferential treatment or enter into partnerships that could undermine the new government.
   C. These interests would combine into factions and seek political gain.

VI. The antifederalists’ understanding of history made clear that this republican government would collapse.
   A. Like those who moved the resistance movement forward in the 1760s and early 1770s, the antifederalists used history as a guide.
   B. They believed that the system of government as it existed would produce a tyranny.

Essential Reading:
Cecelia Kenyon, ed., *The Antifederalists.*

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. Was the antifederalists’ critique a truer reflection of the ideals of the Revolution than the U.S. Constitution?
2. Which parts of their critique now seem the most prescient?
Lecture Thirty-Nine
The Federalists’ Response

Scope: As soon as the antifederalists began to express their criticism, the defenders of the U.S. Constitution knew they would have to launch a counteroffensive to get the document ratified by nine states. To do so, they took the fears of the critics seriously. The most prominent of the defenders were James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, who, along with John Jay, wrote a series of letters under the name “Publius” for the ratification debates in New York; these quickly became known as The Federalist papers. In a series of short essays, Madison and Hamilton laid out an ideological defense of the Constitution as it emerged from Philadelphia. They contended that the country was so vast that no single group would be able to seize power and use it to trample the rights of the minority. They spoke eloquently of the need for a powerful central state, all the time reminding their readers that it was the people at large, not the federal government, who possessed ultimate sovereignty. They even defended the most seemingly elitist branch of the national government, the Supreme Court, by suggesting that it would become the ultimate guarantor of liberty, given that its members were free of the entangling burdens of politics. Yet for all of the merit of their arguments, the federalists also recognized that the lack of a bill of rights might present a real problem. Thus, Madison promised that should the Constitution be ratified, he would set to work on revising it by adding a series of amendments that would provide more explicit protections of individual liberties.

Outline

I. The seriousness of the antifederalists’ critique forced those who supported the Constitution to provide in-depth justifications for its parts.
   A. The most important of these advocates of the new Constitution were James Madison and Alexander Hamilton.
   B. Together with John Jay, Hamilton and Madison produced a series of papers relating to the debate in New York, which they published under the name “Publius.”
   C. Those arguments appeared rapidly across the country and eventually became known as The Federalist.

II. The authors of The Federalist papers attempted a point-by-point refutation of the primary critiques offered by the antifederalists.
   A. The papers laid out a theory of government that was consistent with the principles of the Revolution.
   B. The Federalist demonstrated a deep understanding of politics.
   C. The most important parts of The Federalist became foundations of American political thought.

III. Madison, in Federalist 10, defused the problem of factions in an extended republic.
   A. He admitted that factions, by which he meant groups of people with a common interest that was not necessarily the interest of others, would exist.
   B. He showed how the dangers of factions would be reduced in a large republic.

IV. In Federalist 48 and 51, Madison wrote of the internal checks that would prevent one branch of government from becoming all powerful.
   A. He did not believe that only the virtuous would be elected to federal offices.
   B. Instead, he believed that it would be the competing ambitions of members of different branches that would provide stability.
      1. In one famous phrase, he wrote, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary.”
      2. Because humans were not divine, the most effective government would be one in which the ambitious had to challenge each other regularly, thereby preventing one faction from gaining too much power.
V. In *Federalist* 78, Hamilton offered a defense of the judicial branch, which had seemed especially dangerous to antifederalists because its members served for life.

A. Hamilton contended that the judiciary would become the ultimate protector of the interests of the people.

B. He argued that it had the least “capacity to annoy or injure them.”

C. The judiciary was crucial to solving disputes between other branches of the government or between the states and the federal government.

VI. It is almost impossible to overemphasize the importance of *The Federalist* papers.

A. To this day, they are studied closely for clues to the ideas of the Founders.

B. They are the most significant component of the canon of political science texts generated in the United States.

**Essential Reading:**

**Supplementary Reading:**

**Questions to Consider:**
1. Were the arguments put forth in *The Federalist* papers an after-the-fact justification for the creation of a powerful government that could, in fact, support the rise of a tyrant?
2. Why have *The Federalist* papers become so crucial in American political thinking?
Lecture Forty
The Bill of Rights

Scope: After ratification of the Constitution in 1789, Madison set down to craft the federal bill of rights. The task, he soon learned, was not easy. What exactly constituted a right, and how was it to be phrased? Did the federal government possess the ability to suppress individual liberties if there was no clause in the Constitution giving it those powers explicitly? Many Americans thought they knew the answers to such questions, so they wrote to him, proposing approximately 200 separate rights. Some of them turned out to be highly specific, if not peculiar; others spoke to more general concerns, such as the right to freedom of speech and to assemble. In the end, Madison distilled the suggestions into a group of 10 amendments, which included such well-known liberties as the right of free speech and the free expression of religious belief, as well as a series of rights primarily associated with criminal law and the rights of the accused. Madison concluded with amendments that reflected two powerful ideological strains of his day: the 9th amendment, protecting individuals’ rights even if the specific rights were not enumerated in the Constitution, and the 10th amendment, recognizing the prior sovereignty of the states. The Bill of Rights became part of the Constitution in 1791 and seemed to end the intense ideological battles that had raged since Otis had taken the case of the Boston merchants a generation earlier.

Outline

I. The ratification process went quickly in some states and more slowly in others.
   A. Debates at the state ratifying convention revealed continued ambivalence about the lack of a bill of rights.
   B. The debate in New York was especially vigorous.

II. The federalists, especially James Madison, recognized the legitimacy of the antifederalists’ critique.
   A. Some federalists believed that a bill of rights was not necessary because the Constitution enumerated the powers that the federal government possessed.
   B. In the absence of a provision specifying that the federal government could overrule state bills of rights, neither the president nor Congress could do so.
   C. Madison recognized that even if that argument were sound, more was to be gained by adding a bill of rights than by denying the need for it.

III. Madison wrestled with many competing ideas and eventually drafted the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, which became the Bill of Rights.
   A. There was no consensus about what constituted a right.
      1. Individuals and states each had their own view of what needed to be protected.
      2. Madison had to find a way to express the existence of certain rights without putting limits on the rights that each free individual possessed.
   B. When drafting the Bill of Rights, Madison received approximately 200 suggestions for what should be included.
      1. Many of the suggested rights were highly localized and intended to provide protections to specific individuals and groups.
      2. The suggestions often lacked the phrasing that Madison later applied to the first 10 amendments.

IV. The Bill of Rights as it emerged established specific protections.
   A. It forbade Congress from taking action in certain areas.
   B. The 1st amendment protected freedom of speech, assembly, and the practice of religion.
   C. The 2nd amendment recognized the recent military struggle and allowed individuals to bear arms so that they could fight in the militia.
   D. Various amendments established protections for those accused of crimes.
E. One clause of the 5th amendment protected individuals’ property from seizure without compensation.

V. The 9th and 10th amendments emphasized that the enumeration of certain rights did not mean that others did not exist or were limited.

A. The 9th amendment, rarely cited in court decisions, specified that the listing of certain rights in the amendments should “not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.”
   1. That sentence summarized much of what was revolutionary about the American Revolution.
   2. It put forward in law the idea that the people retain all rights except for any limited powers they grant to the government to protect their society.

B. The 10th amendment, cited frequently in court decisions, specified that “powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.”
   1. This amendment recognized the prior sovereignty of the states and served to protect their interests.
   2. It restated the ideal, already present in the 9th amendment, that the people remained the ultimate sovereign power.

Essential Reading:
U.S. Constitution, Amendments I–X.
Bernard Bailyn, Ideological Origins, postscript.

Supplementary Reading:
Akhil Reed Amar, The Bill of Rights.

Questions to Consider:
1. Were the federalists correct that the Bill of Rights was not necessary?
2. What was the legal purpose of these 10 amendments?
Lecture Forty-One
Politics in the 1790s

Scope: The election of George Washington and the ratification of the Bill of Rights apparently completed the ideological transformation of American politics. The citizens—not subjects—of the United States had demonstrated that they could work together to create a fundamental law. By 1792, the Constitution established a federal government with sufficient coercive powers to govern effectively and, simultaneously, to protect the rights of the nation’s residents. In his first inaugural address, Washington recognized the significance of the Revolution and proclaimed that he would not be guided by partisan impulses. But during his two administrations, a system of party politics emerged and quickly revealed the deep rifts that existed in the new nation. One source of continual contention was the future course of the American economy. At the same time, the Supreme Court began its operations, struggling to put the principles of the Revolution (as embodied in the Constitution) into practice and moving toward the idea of judicial review, which became fixed in 1803. The Judiciary Act of 1789 laid out a system of courts beneath the Supreme Court. Perhaps most significant, the Naturalization Act of 1795 redefined the nature of membership in the nation. Individuals were no longer subjects of a monarch because they were born in his or her realm. In the United States, anyone could become a citizen, even immigrants. The volitional nature of citizenship was among the most radical achievements of the Revolutionary generation. Immigrants founded such settlements as Asylum, Pennsylvania, and found peace far away from Europe’s deadly divisions.

Outline

I. The Constitution established a frame for the federal government, but even the most far-reaching thinkers of the age could not have known how the new political system would function.
   A. Despite the Revolutionary generation’s fear of what were termed factions, political parties formed almost immediately, drawing strength from the debate over the Constitution.
   B. The primary conflict was between proponents of a powerful central government, known as Federalists, and those who feared that it possessed too much power, who eventually came to be known as Republicans or Jeffersonians.
   C. George Washington claimed in his first inaugural address that he would work in the interest of the entire population, not for a particular party.

II. The debate over the future of the economy pitted the interests of Hamilton against those of Jefferson.
   A. Jefferson, shaped by his years in France, wanted to create a nation of yeoman farmers.
   B. Hamilton, seeking economic independence for the nation, believed that the United States needed to develop its commercial infrastructure so that the nation could rely less on imports and the connections they entailed.

III. The judicial system began to assume its modern form.
   A. The Judiciary Act of 1789 created the federal court system, including the Supreme Court, as well as the circuit and district courts.
   B. A system of judicial review, in which the Supreme Court would serve as the ultimate arbiter, began to emerge, though it was not set until the 1803 case of Marbury v. Madison.
      1. In turning down a request by the Washington administration to offer an advisory opinion, the Supreme Court established the idea that it would rule only on actual cases before it.
      2. Three cases in 1796—Chisholm v. Georgia, Hylton v. United States, and Ware v. Hylton—began to give shape to the Constitution and the judiciary’s role in it.

IV. The Naturalization Act of 1795 made it possible for individuals to become citizens.
   A. The act replaced the nation’s first Naturalization Act of 1790.
B. The 1795 act clarified the rules by which an immigrant who was a “free white person” could become a citizen.
   1. The prospective citizen needed to declare an oath three years before becoming a citizen that he or she renounced any allegiance to a foreign state.
   2. At the time of becoming a citizen, the candidate had to declare another oath, swearing that he or she had been a resident in the United States for the previous five years.
   3. The court needed to be satisfied that the prospective candidate would be attached to “the principles of the Constitution of the United States.”
   4. Any prospective citizen who formerly held a hereditary title elsewhere needed to renounce it.
C. As a result of this act and subsequent legislation, the United States became a target for immigrants.

V. During the 1790s, Europeans, many of them seeking to avoid the tumults prompted by the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, emigrated to the United States.
   A. They joined existing communities or moved out into the hinterland to form their own in such places as Asylum, Pennsylvania.
   B. Such migration proved the value of the Naturalization Acts.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. How did politics in the 1790s reflect the movement for independence?
2. Did the emergence of parties represent a danger to the new republic?
Lecture Forty-Two

The Alien and Sedition Acts

Scope: The election of John Adams in 1796 confirmed the power of the Federalist Party. Though Adams had played a crucial role in the resistance movement, his politics had become more conservative. By the time of his election, he had supported policies that promoted the powers of the central government. His administration outraged other Revolutionary leaders, notably Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, who feared that the rise of the federal government spelled trouble for state politics. Fearing the spread of a new round of radical sentiment spilling over from France, where Jefferson had lived in the middle of the 1780s, before the revolution of 1789, Adams’s administration attempted to stifle dissent. It did so through the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts, which quickly became a test case for the extent of political speech in the United States. Using the protections embedded in the Bill of Rights, Jefferson and Madison battled the federal acts with the Kentucky and Virginia Resolves. The Federalists had succeeded in jailing some dissenting newspaper editors, but the rise of state power through these resolves made the acts unworkable. They remained on the books only until 1800, when the new administration allowed them to expire.

Outline

I. The transition from the presidency of George Washington to that of John Adams represented continuity for the Federalists.
   A. In his farewell address, Washington warned against deep immersion into European politics through “permanent alliances.”
   B. He feared that the United States would be dragged into the ongoing conflict in Europe between Britain and France.
   C. His words supported the notion that the United States should seek to remain neutral in times of conflict.

II. Federalists’ fears of the radicalism of the French Revolution led the government into an alliance with Britain and into the so-called “quasi-war” with France.
   A. This action became one of the earliest challenges for Adams, whose effort to halt the conflict backfired.
   B. As a result, Adams became increasingly anti-French, much to the annoyance of Thomas Jefferson and his supporters.

III. To suppress dissent, Adams’s administration supported the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798.
   A. The Alien Enemies Act gave the president expanded powers to declare non-citizens as “alien enemies,” who could be arrested or exiled during a time of “declared war.”
      1. Courts were bound to enforce the act.
      2. Marshals had the authority to exile the accused enemy from territory belonging to the United States.
   B. The Sedition Act gave enhanced authority to government officials to charge individuals with conspiracy against the United States.
      1. Federal authorities could prosecute even if the alleged conspiracy was not effective.
      2. The penalty for those convicted of the crime was a fine of up to $5,000 and imprisonment for a period of six months to five years.
   C. The Sedition Act also penalized any individuals who either wrote or assisted in writing, printing, and publishing “scandalous and malicious” attacks on the president or Congress.
      1. Those accused of the crime needed to convince a jury of the truth of their charges if they were to be exonerated.
      2. This provision followed the already established colonial precedent that the publication of truth cannot be deemed libel.
IV. Political opponents, notably those allied with the Republican views of Jefferson, viewed the acts as an effort to stifle legitimate opposition.

A. Opposition to the Alien and Sedition Acts became rooted in the states.

B. James Madison authored the so-called Virginia Resolves, while Jefferson was behind the Kentucky Resolves.
   1. These resolutions used the logic of the Bill of Rights and the Constitution to argue for the unconstitutionality of the Alien and Sedition Acts.
   2. Each offered a powerful critique of the direction of the federal government.

C. The acts remained in effect, but they were not enforced after the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800.

D. Although aimed to disarm specific federal acts, the resolves demonstrated that it would be possible, at least in theory, for the actions of individual states to shift the course of national politics.

E. It was impossible to know at the time, but the legacy of such efforts could later be seen in southern states’ efforts to disagree with or nullify federal actions they did not like.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. How did the political debate of the 1790s reflect the immersion of the United States into the larger commercial and diplomatic world?

2. In what ways did the Virginia and Kentucky Resolves echo James Otis’s argument in the Writs of Assistance case? What was different this time around?
The Election of 1800

Scope: The presidencies of Washington and Adams had demonstrated that the fears of partisan interests dominating national politics—the exact fears that Madison had tried to allay in The Federalist—were legitimate. When the election of 1800 put Thomas Jefferson into the presidency, Jefferson could have used the opportunity to take political revenge. But he recognized the historic significance of what had happened. When he took his oath to uphold the Constitution, the act represented a peaceful transfer of power between opposing parties. Compared to the bloodshed and chaos that engulfed France during the 1790s and led to the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, the moment was especially notable. Jefferson understood this perfectly. He used his inaugural address not to celebrate the rise of his party but, instead, to restate the core principles of the Constitution and, specifically, the Bill of Rights. By reasserting the balance between the states and the federal government, Jefferson enhanced the power of his office, enabling him to amass the political capital necessary for the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. That same year, Chief Justice John Marshall wrote the majority opinion in Marbury v. Madison, thereby establishing the permanent role that the Supreme Court would play as the adjudicator of disputes with possible constitutional significance.

Outline

I. The election of 1800 was one of the most important in American history.
   A. Though the election results were disputed at the time, Americans on either side of the political divide came to accept the legitimacy of Jefferson’s victory.
   B. The result was the first peaceful transfer of political power between opposing parties, establishing a precedent that would remain a defining feature of American public life.
      1. Jefferson could have sought revenge against the Federalists but chose not to.
      2. He used his inaugural address to quell the fears of his Federalist opponents and reminded all that the core ideological foundations were not tied to any particular party.
   C. His line—“we are all Republicans; we are all Federalists”—became one of the most famous ever expressed in an inaugural address and a hallmark of American politics.

II. During his inaugural address, Jefferson asserted what he believed were the central concerns of the federal government.
   A. He believed that the government should play a minimal role in the nation’s economy.
   B. Jefferson promised “equal and exact justice to all men” regardless of their political views or religious affiliation.
   C. The new president stressed his belief in the importance of state governments and in many of the ideas embedded in the Bill of Rights.
   D. He recognized the importance of the militia, especially during the early moments of a conflict before regular troops could arrive, but he reasserted “the supremacy of the civil over the military authority.”
   E. Jefferson reminded his listeners of some of the protections embedded in the Bill of Rights.

III. The Louisiana Purchase of 1803 virtually doubled the size of the United States in a single moment.
   A. Jefferson sent Lewis and Clark out to explore this new territory.
   B. Their report provided the United States with the first in-depth assessment of the resources and peoples of the West.
   C. The acquisition of land made it possible for Jefferson to ensure, as far as anyone could predict, that the United States would have sufficient land to become a nation of freeholding farmers.
IV. In the 1803 case of Marbury v. Madison, Chief Justice John Marshall clarified that the Supreme Court would be the final arbiter in cases involving the federal courts.

A. The case dealt specifically with the limits of authority within the executive branch of the U.S. government.

B. It clarified the issue of judicial review that had been raised earlier in Chisholm v. Georgia, Hylton v. United States, and Ware v. Hylton.

C. Marshall’s decision established the Supreme Court as the authority on the limits of power of the branches of the federal government.

Essential Reading:
Bruce Ackerman, The Failure of the Founding Fathers.

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. What was the ideological significance of Jefferson’s inaugural address?
2. Is it fair to assert that, as of 1800, the goals of the Revolution had been fulfilled?
Lecture Forty-Four

Women and the American Revolution

Scope: Virtually every public document generated during the Revolution, most notably the Declaration of Independence, spoke of the rights of men. What did this silence on questions of gender mean in the age of the American Revolution? Scholars have long understood that the phrasing of Jefferson and others was a sign of common usage and that such phrases as “all men are created equal” included women as well as men. But as early as the 1770s, some women, most famously Abigail Adams, recognized that the Revolution afforded an opportunity to improve the status of women in American society. As a result of the Revolution, changes were made in the legal standing of women and some genuine improvements came about in the condition of women. But as Adams and other women recognized, there were also limits to the nature of those changes. The Revolution had changed much about the character of politics and the relationship between the individual and the state. Specifically, the idea developed of the republican mother, who was responsible for tending to the moral needs of the men in her family; without these women, so this line of logic went, the Revolution would eventually fail. But even the republican mother was essentially confined, in a political sense, within the home, while her husband and grown sons participated actively in the public worlds of commerce and statecraft. Despite their new role, women remained inferior to men in many areas, especially in the eyes of the law. Indeed, when the nation’s first significant movement for women’s rights appeared in the 1840s, the authors of the Seneca Falls Declaration of Rights and Sentiments based their proclamation on the Declaration of Independence but recast it to be sensitive to gender.

Outline

I. In British America, varied restrictions were in place on opportunities for women, particularly restrictions on the range of economic opportunity open to them.
   A. The common law principle of coverture existed in the colonies.
      1. Under this principle, a woman’s property became her husband’s at the time of marriage.
      2. Prenuptial agreements in the colonies had eroded the power of coverture, but it still existed.
   B. Women could not become lawyers, judges, or jurors.
   C. Women could have femme sol status, which gave them sufficient legal ability to conduct trade.
   D. Marriage was understood as a contract between unequals, analogous in some ways to the master-servant relationship.
   E. Widows possessed specific rights, including the right to one-third of the estates of their deceased husbands.
   F. Divorce was typically an ecclesiastical function (as was marriage) and was rare.
      1. In some places, marriage was a civil arrangement, which made divorce easier to obtain though still uncommon.
      2. Legal separation was more common, but this status, too, was difficult to attain because it normally entailed a private bill from a legislative body.
   G. Primogeniture and entail, common in Europe, were not dominant customs in the colonies, where partible inheritance was more common, and daughters often received movable property instead of land.

II. The Revolution did ease some of the restrictions on women, but limits remained.
   A. Some states passed divorce laws, but a divorce was still difficult for a woman to get.
   B. In places, women found it easier to participate in trade.
   C. Coverture survived the Revolution intact.
   D. The rights of widows were, in places, weakened by the Revolution.
III. The Revolution established the idea of the *republican mother*.

A. According to the ideology of the Revolution, the republic could survive only if those who participated publicly in it acted virtuously at all times.

B. According to the dominant line of thinking, because women inhabited the separate sphere of the home, they were less likely to be tainted by the larger society.

C. Within the household, women were to prepare their husbands and grown sons to act in a virtuous way in the public sphere.

D. The idea of the republican mother solidified women’s status within the home and the private sphere.

IV. Abigail Adams’s writings on women became the most powerful of her generation.

A. During the war, she and her husband, John, exchanged letters frequently, and she often raised issues about the status of women.

B. Throughout the war, Adams kept the homestead in Braintree, Massachusetts, organized and operating, a sign (as if one was needed) of her abilities.
   1. Her letters testified to the costs of war on the home front.
   2. Yet despite the formal limitations on women’s activities, Adams (and other women), in fact, played crucial roles supporting the war effort.

C. In her most famous letter to John on March 31, 1776, she expressed her hope that those debating independence from Britain would also “Remember the Ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors.”
   1. She feared that the Revolution would amount to little if it did not erode the power that husbands had over their wives.
   2. As she put it, “all Men would be tyrants if they could.”

V. Despite the recognition of the limits to women’s participation in public life, the Revolutionary generation did not alter the status of women in fundamental ways.

A. Two generations later, the ideas of the Revolution would resurface among women seeking greater political authority.

B. Women at a convention in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, used the Declaration of Independence as a model for their enumeration of grievances against American men.

C. Even then, women’s political rights were limited and remained so until passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1920 granted them the right to vote.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What does the rise of the idea of the “republican mother” reveal about the relationship between gender and politics in the age of the American Revolution?

2. Was Abigail Adams’s critique of the treatment of women during the Revolutionary generation accurate?
Lecture Forty-Five
The Revolution and Native Americans

Scope: Most Native Americans wanted no part of the American Revolution. In fact, many were probably surprised to find out that their behavior in war was listed among the crimes of George III in the Declaration of Independence. But despite the efforts of many to remain neutral, the Revolutionary War spread deep into Indian Country and forced Native Americans to take sides. There was no single native position on the crisis, though greater numbers of indigenous nations sided with the British than with the rebels. That calculation made sense given that the Native Americans’ primary problem before the Revolution was the spread of colonists onto their lands; an alliance with Britain might, some hoped, provide some assistance in keeping the land-hungry settlers at bay. But alliances with the British proved disastrous for natives. Further, despite their efforts on behalf of the Crown, British negotiators did not have Native Americans in mind when they accepted the terms of the Treaty of Paris of 1783. In the aftermath of that settlement, Euro-American settlers attempted to push into Indian Country. They often met resistance, and the war that had come to a close for other Americans continued until 1795 for indigenous nations. By the time the dust settled, Native Americans found themselves excluded from the United States.

Outline

I. Before the war, tensions often divided Native Americans from other Americans.
   A. The violence of the Paxton Boys in 1763 suggested the depth of hostility that some non-natives had for natives, but Benjamin Franklin’s response revealed that not all colonists shared such animosity.
   B. In most instances, colonists’ opinions about natives depended on where the colonists lived and the extent of their contact with indigenous peoples.
   C. Individuals who had extensive contact with natives were often impressed by their knowledge of the American environment and their willingness to engage in trade.

II. When the war loomed, natives and non-natives each hoped that Indians would be able to remain neutral.
   A. Congress made its desires clear to a group of Iroquois visiting Philadelphia in 1775.
   B. Most Native Americans agreed that the conflict was between Britain and the colonists.

III. The war itself spread through much of Indian Country, forcing Native Americans to choose sides.
   A. The Declaration of Independence criticized George III for endeavoring “to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions.”
      1. The accusation ignored the fact that many colonists fought similarly in North America.
      2. Given the overall tone of the document, the inclusion of natives suggested a deep ambivalence, at best, among the rebels toward Indians.
   B. Most indigenous peoples sided with the British because they believed that their own future was more secure with the agents of the Crown.

IV. The war in Indian Country was often characterized by brutality.
   A. Native Americans did much of the fighting against outlying colonial settlements allied with the resistance.
   B. During reprisals, members of the Continental Army tried both to kill natives and to destroy their livelihoods.
   C. Soldiers’ diaries reflected the deliberate campaign of destruction waged by the Continental Army as it tore through Iroquoia in 1779.
   D. After the war ended for most Americans, hostilities continued in the hinterland.
V. During the Constitutional Convention, the subject of Native Americans attracted little notice, but they were not ignored entirely.

A. Article I, section 8, noted that Congress would have the authority to “regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes.”

B. That clause defined Native Americans as outsiders in the new nation.

VI. When the United States sought to expand its territory into the Old Northwest in the 1780s and 1790s, it encountered native peoples who wanted the Ohio River to be the permanent western boundary of the new country.

A. In the early 1790s, Shawnees and other native peoples defeated the United States in the Ohio Country.

B. In 1794, the United States avenged its loss and, at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, forced the Shawnees and other native peoples of the region to surrender.

C. The 20-year-long war in the hinterland came to a close with the Treaty of Greenville, Ohio, in 1795.

VII. Long after 1800, Native Americans had to confront the legacy of the Revolution.

A. In 1831, when Cherokees tried to halt the state of Georgia from removing them from their land, they discovered that they had no standing in American courts and, thus, could not seek assistance from the Supreme Court.

B. The Cherokees’ appeal reached the Supreme Court through an intermediary in the case of Worcester v. Georgia in 1832; the result was a decision by John Marshall that labeled natives as “domestic dependent nations.”

1. No other group of Americans ever had that status.

2. Marshall’s decision represented his understanding of the place of natives in American society at the time of the drafting of the U.S. Constitution.

C. Unlike African Americans, who finally achieved citizenship through amendments to the Constitution after the Civil War, Native Americans achieved similar status only in the 1920s through acts of Congress.

Essential Reading:
Colin Calloway, The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities.

Supplementary Reading:
Peter C. Mancall, Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800.
James Merrell, The Indians’ New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal.
Anthony F. C. Wallace, The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca.

Questions to Consider:
1. Given the long-term problems faced by Native Americans as a result of European colonization, is it reasonable to expect that things might have turned out differently?

2. How has Native Americans’ unique status under the U.S. Constitution, itself a direct product of the Revolution, shaped later history in Indian Country?
Lecture Forty-Six

The American Revolution as Social Movement

Scope: In 1926, the historian J. Franklin Jameson published a short book in which he looked directly for the social consequences of the American Revolution. Though historians do not now routinely use that study, the questions raised by Jameson and by other historians over time compel us to consider the ways in which the political movement and its resolution altered American society. In addition to the changes in the lives of women, African Americans, and Native Americans, the Revolution had a far-ranging effect on the lives of everyone, including many who fought in the war and those who lived in areas devastated by military campaigns. The Revolution opened new opportunities for some, especially those well positioned to take advantage of novel commercial possibilities. Still, the movement did not erase economic distinctions within the society. Poor men who had served in the Continental Army, for example, discovered that their service did not necessarily lead to more comfortable lives; the compensation veterans received after 1783 was less than many had expected. But the Revolution did have vital social consequences. Most notably, it altered relations between free people and, specifically, reduced (and practically eliminated in many instances) the notions of deference that had existed during the colonial era. Despite all the continuities, American society had changed in precise ways. Although not all citizens enjoyed the benefits of liberty equally, their chances for doing so had improved dramatically as a result of the Revolution and the ideas behind it.

Outline

I. The Revolution had little effect on the distribution of property within the new states.
   A. As the war went on month after month, many of those who enlisted tended to be poorer than the average free American.
   B. By the end of the war, the most experienced soldiers were men who had remained for a number of years and had demonstrated a commitment to the cause much more durable than that of individuals who joined when the war was nearby but then lost interest.
   C. Despite occasional promises of a better life, most who served did not benefit financially as a result of their service.

II. The end of the war prompted many loyalists to emigrate.
   A. Despite John Adams’s later claim that one-third of the population was loyal to the king, no more than 100,000 individuals decided to leave.
   B. Loyalists were concentrated in certain professions, including the law and the clergy, but some members of these same professions supported the rebellion.
   C. The Treaty of 1783 made provisions for the return of confiscated estates to loyalists, but it was difficult to enforce.

III. In the postwar period, the political fortunes of the poor did not improve dramatically, despite the fact that new lands were available as a result of the confiscation of loyalists’ estates.
   A. Some states tried to prevent land speculation after the war by imposing strict limits on the amount of land an individual could acquire.
   B. But many speculators found ways to evade the law and soon laid claim to substantial tracts of land.
   C. That act did not necessarily make the speculators rich; in fact, some of them lost their fortunes as a result of overextending their finances.
   D. Redistribution of property was not among the ideas promoted by the Founders.

IV. Deference had been the order of the day in the colonial era.
   A. Before the war, colonists recognized boundaries that separated some from others.
B. Social stratification was especially pronounced in the South, where less wealthy free people sought ways to ensure that their status did not sink to the level of slaves, all the time knowing who their social betters were.

V. After the war and the statements of universal equality, notions of deference faded dramatically.
   A. Long-established social hierarchies no longer fit the prevailing political culture, despite the fact that the Revolution did not lead to widespread redistribution of property.
   B. Signs of deferential behavior began to disappear.
   C. Property remained unevenly distributed, which meant that some people had limited access to state political systems that established property qualifications for voting.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:

Questions to Consider:
1. How is it possible to measure the shifts in the ways that Americans understood the world around them and their place in it?
2. Did the Revolution betray those who fought in the Continental Army?
3. What explains the gap between Revolutionary ideals about equality and the experiences of veterans after the Revolution?
Lecture Forty-Seven
Reflections by the Revolutionary Generation

Scope: On July 4, 1776, as the Declaration of Independence was being signed in Philadelphia, Governor Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts received an honorary doctorate in civil law from Oxford University. Across the Atlantic Ocean, the world that Hutchinson understood was already being undermined and, in many ways, destroyed by the forces of a rebellion that he never quite grasped. Other Americans, too, recognized the shifts that were taking place and saw that American society would never be the same again. Among them were individuals who left posterity with records of their ideas during the Revolutionary age. One such writer was J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a Frenchman who arrived in New York in 1759 at the age of 24 and published Letters from an American Farmer in 1782. Hailed by some literary critics as a major milestone in the emergence of American letters, the book contains keen insights into the nature of America as it emerged from the Revolutionary War. The last of these observers was Mercy Otis Warren, whose Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution was among the earliest histories of this formative generation.

Outline

I. Thomas Hutchinson witnessed his world collapse as a result of the Revolution.
   A. Hutchinson was, by the time of the Revolution, the most important member of a family that traced its American origins to the Puritan migration of the 17th century.
   B. He always believed that his actions were in the best interests of the people of Massachusetts, but he became the object of loathing by many of them.
      1. Despite his opposition to the Stamp Act, his house was ransacked.
      2. The publication of secret letters he had sent to London seemed to reveal to colonists that he was bent on depriving them of their liberty.
      3. He had political enemies at all levels of Massachusetts society.
   C. Hutchinson’s critique of the Declaration of Independence stands as a monument to a different view of North America in 1776.

II. Other well-known writers of the period include Benjamin Franklin, the self-made man, and Thomas Jefferson, the genius.
   A. Benjamin Franklin became an icon in Revolutionary America.
      1. His Autobiography is one of the most carefully constructed observations of life in North America in the 18th century.
      2. The outpouring of grief on his death was a signal of his special place in the new society.
   B. Thomas Jefferson was one of the most internally conflicted men of his generation.
      1. He wrestled with the fact that he owned slaves.
      2. His Notes on the State of Virginia remains a crucial clue to understand the sources of his ambivalence on the subject.

III. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur is best known today for his Letters from an American Farmer, which he published in 1782.
   A. Crèvecoeur had lived in France and Canada before arriving in New York in 1759.
   B. By the time he settled on his farm in upstate New York, he had been in the colonies for a decade.
   C. His book was among the earliest accounts of the new United States by someone who was not a native.
      1. He included a devastating chapter on the nature of slavery in South Carolina.
      2. He also included a chapter in which he posed the question: “What is an American?”
      3. His answer to that question revealed much about the nature of the society created by the American Revolution.
IV. Mercy Otis Warren’s *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution* was first published in 1805.
   A. Warren came from a Revolutionary family.
   B. Even before independence, she began to express her political ideas in her published work.
   C. Her history of the Revolution emphasized the role of specific individuals.
   D. Like other historians of her age, Warren tended to emphasize the moral qualities of her historical subjects.

**Essential Reading:**

**Supplementary Reading:**
Bernard Bailyn, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson.*
Lester Cohen, *The Revolutionary Histories.*

**Questions to Consider:**
1. Who was this American, this new person described by Crèvecoeur?
2. Why have these three books from the 18th century—by Crèvecoeur, Franklin, and Jefferson—remained in print for so long?
Lecture Forty-Eight

The Meaning of the Revolution

Scope: In 1818, John Adams looked back on the Revolution and recognized that it was not the war itself but the change in sentiments of Americans toward government that constituted the real revolution. Adams could have added that as a result of the Revolution, Americans were citizens of a republic, not subjects of a monarch. The people at large had become sovereign, and they created state and national governments to meet their needs. Of course, the Revolution did not establish equality for all Americans in the sense that it is now understood, but though some Americans recognized the theoretical shortcomings of the political movement, the Revolution nonetheless redefined the nature of politics in the Western world. The “self-evident truths” of 1776 had become permanent features of the American political universe, as had the ideals expressed in Jefferson’s Statute for Religious Freedom. Even when the Civil War ripped the fabric of the nation in its most severe test, the principles of the Revolution survived. Virtually every subsequent political movement, from the drive for women’s suffrage to the civil rights movement, drew explicitly on the language of the Revolutionary generation. The ideology of the Revolution had become the American creed and remains so today.

Outline

I. The Revolution had permanent and specific effects on American society.
   A. As a result of the Revolution, the American people emerged as sovereign.
      1. At the start of the resistance, American colonists were subjects of a king.
      2. By the time of the Constitution, they had taken control over their own society.
      3. Americans became citizens of a republic who possessed rights, not the beneficiaries of limited rights bestowed on them by an all-powerful, external sovereign.
   B. The people created a form of government that met their needs.
      1. The state constitutions and the U.S. Constitution each reflected the ability of the American people to create and maintain their fundamental law.
      2. The people gave the federal and state governments certain specified powers, not blanket approval to do whatever their elected officials chose.

II. The Revolution did not create a world in which all people were treated equally.
   A. Despite the rhetoric of the Declaration of Independence, an individual’s abilities to participate in the political process still reflected gender, race, and economic standing.
   B. The Revolution established as law certain ideals that became rallying points in future political movements.
      1. Women’s rights advocates turned to the Declaration of Independence when they drafted the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments at Seneca Falls in 1848.
      2. Abolitionists turned to the promise of equality to battle slavery.
      3. Civil War soldiers’ letters reveal that men on each side believed they were fighting to uphold the core principles of the American Revolution.

III. During the Revolutionary era, many Americans recognized the significance of the movement.
   A. Some believed that its values would spread well beyond the new nation.
   B. Adams and Jefferson, carrying on a remarkable epistolary relationship in their later years, continued to debate the central issues of the Revolution.

IV. The American Revolution and the government that it created made the United States and established its ideals.
   A. By the 20th century, the ideals of the Revolution had spread far beyond the boundaries of the United States.
   B. Those ideals helped make the United States a target for millions of non-Americans looking for a better life.
C. American ideals created to serve the specific political ends of the Revolutionary generation continue to drive the nation’s sense of itself and non-Americans’ understanding of the United States.

V. Americans continue to debate the proper relationship between individuals and the state.
   A. The struggle between power and liberty remains as fundamental to daily life today as it was in the 18th century.
   B. The limits of state power motivated James Otis in the Writs of Assistance case and became the central issue of the American Revolution.

Essential Reading:

Supplementary Reading:
Alfred Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*.

Questions to Consider:
1. What would America look like if the Revolution had not happened?
2. How have the ideals of those who pushed the resistance movement forward in the 1760s and 1770s shaped the modern understanding of politics and the relationship between the individual and the state?
Timeline

October 25, 1760.............................Death of King George II and accession of King George III.
February 1761 ...............................The Writs of Assistance case is argued in Boston.
February 10, 1763 ...........................The Peace of Paris is signed, bringing to an end the Seven Years’ War and greatly expanding British territory in North America.
October 7, 1763...............................The English establish the Proclamation Line, which attempts to stop all colonial migration west of the crest of the Appalachian Mountains.
December 13, 1763 .........................The Paxton Boys, a backwoods group of vigilantes, slaughter peaceful Conestoga Indians in Lancaster and march on Philadelphia, where they are turned back two weeks later.
April 5, 1764 .................................Parliament passes the Sugar Act, which lowers taxes on imported molasses in an effort to discourage smuggling.
April 19, 1764 .................................Parliament authorizes the Currency Act, which limits the use of paper money in the North American colonies.
June 13, 1764 .................................The Massachusetts general court establishes the colonies’ first Committee of Correspondence to organize protest against British government actions.
August 1764 .................................Boston merchants organize the first non-importation effort in protest of the Sugar Act.
March 22, 1765 ...............................Parliament passes the Stamp Act, scheduled to go into operation on November 1.
Spring 1765 .................................Upon hearing news of the Stamp Act, colonists begin to protest; James Otis, John Adams, and Patrick Henry each make public statements against the act; colonists form groups known as the Sons of Liberty.
August 14, 1765 ..............................Sons of Liberty in Boston hang an effigy of the stamp collector (Andrew Oliver) from a tree; he resigns the next day.
August 26, 1765 ..............................Sons of Liberty trash and burn the house of Lieutenant Governor Thomas Hutchinson.
March 18, 1766 ...............................Parliament repeals the Stamp Act and passes the Declaratory Bill.
June 29, 1767 .................................Parliament authorizes the Townshend Acts and creates the American Board of Customs Commissioners, to be housed in Boston, where British customs officials (who arrived in November) would be based.
January 20, 1768 .............................Lord Hillsborough becomes the secretary of state for the North American colonies, the first time the British have tried to organize the administration of American affairs in a single office.
March 1768 .................................Parliament creates four vice-admiralty courts, to be based in Halifax, Boston, Philadelphia, and Charleston.
June 10, 1768 .................................British officials seize John Hancock’s Liberty. Bostonians soon riot in protest, prompting British troops to be ordered to the city; they arrive on October 1.
August 1, 1769 ...............................Thomas Hutchinson becomes governor of Massachusetts.
December 1769 .............................The British, with Lord North as prime minister, decide to repeal all the Townshend duties except for the duty on tea.
March 5, 1770 ...............................The Boston Massacre leads to five deaths; Paul Revere’s engraving of the act becomes the most effective form of propaganda to date for the resistance to British
acts. In early December, six soldiers are acquitted in a Boston court and two others are convicted of manslaughter.

September 1771.........................In response to a request from Samuel Adams, the Town Meeting in Boston establishes Committees of Correspondence.

June 10, 1772 .........................The British Gaspee runs aground off Providence; locals row the crew to shore, then burn the ship.

March 2, 1773 .........................Virginians create a committee of correspondence in response to the Gaspee incident in Rhode Island.

May 10, 1773 ..............................Parliament authorizes the Tea Act in an effort to boost the fortunes of the East India Company; provisions of the act specify that tea contracts would be awarded to consignees, at least some of whom are political favorites.

December 16, 1773 .........................Sons of Liberty in Boston, dressed as Native Americans, dump 90,000 pounds of tea into Boston Harbor, in what becomes known as the “Boston Tea Party.”

January–June 1774................Parliament passes the Coercive or Intolerable Acts to punish the people of Boston and Massachusetts for the Boston Tea Party: The Boston Port Act (March 31) closes the port; the Massachusetts Government Act (May 20) reorganizes the administration of the colony; the Administration of Justice Act (May 20) authorizes trials for colonists to take place outside the province; the Quartering Act (June 2) allows British soldiers to seize unoccupied buildings in Massachusetts; the Quebec Act (June 22) threatens Protestants in New England by enabling the government of Quebec to have control of western lands.

June 17, 1774 .........................Even before news of the final acts has reached Massachusetts, colonists in Boston put out a call for a congress to meet to address the crisis.

September 5, 1774.......................The First Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia and, in October, establishes the Association to enforce non-importation of British goods.

October 7, 1774.........................John Hancock becomes the head of the provincial Committee of Safety.

April 18, 1775 ...............................Paul Revere and William Dawes ride into the countryside to warn of the British advance on Lexington.

April 19, 1775 ...............................Revolutionary War begins with shots fired at Lexington and Concord.

May 10, 1775 ...............................The Second Continental Congress meets in Philadelphia; that same day, Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold take Fort Ticonderoga.

June 17, 1775 .........................Battle of Bunker Hill.

July 6, 1775 ...............................Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking up Arms.

January 1776 .............................Tom Paine publishes Common Sense; it becomes an immediate sensation.

March 17, 1776 ..............................The British evacuate Boston and head toward New York; 10,000 troops take Staten Island on July 2.

May 10, 1776 ...............................Congress authorizes states to establish new forms of government.

July 4, 1776 ...............................Members of Congress sign the Declaration of Independence.

August 27, 1776 .........................The British defeat the Continental Army at Long Island; under the command of William Howe, the British subsequently take New York and New Jersey and defeat the Continental Army again, on October 28, at White Plains.

September 21, 1776 .....................A fire destroys about one-fourth of the buildings in New York City.

December 26, 1776 .....................Washington crosses the Delaware, capturing 1,000 British soldiers at Trenton.

January 3, 1777 .........................Washington launches a raid on Princeton, driving the British back to New York.
July–October 1777 .........................Howe leads a British campaign up the Chesapeake toward Philadelphia, which he occupies after defeating the Continental Army at Brandywine (on September 11) and Germantown (on October 4).

October 17, 1777 .........................Burgoyne surrenders to Gates at Saratoga, signaling the end of the British campaign in the North.

December 1777 ..............................Washington and his troops establish their winter camp at Valley Forge.

February 6, 1778 .........................France signs the Treaty of Amity and Commerce, supporting the Americans against the British; Spain subsequently enters the war as an ally of France. The British reorganize their military campaign and direct their energies toward the South.

March to June 1780 .......................At least 188 Massachusetts towns respond to request to ratify the state constitution; the constitution becomes law at the end of October. The ratification process becomes a model for subsequent state constitutions.

February 27, 1781 .......................The Articles of Confederation become the official form of government once Maryland agrees, the last state to do so.

October 18, 1781 .........................Cornwallis, unable to escape the siege of Yorktown, surrenders, effectively ending the British military effort in North America, though troops remain until 1783.

April 12, 1782 .........................Negotiations to end the conflict begin in Paris.

September 3, 1783 .......................Treaty ends the Revolutionary War.

November 25, 1783 .....................The last British forces leave New York.

December 23, 1783 .....................Washington goes to Congress, meeting in Annapolis, and resigns his commission.


August 1786 .........................Shays’ Rebellion breaks out in western Massachusetts.

September 1786 .......................Delegates from the states who had traveled to Annapolis to revise the Articles of Confederation decide they will meet the following year in Philadelphia to continue the effort.

January 1787 .........................Shays’ Rebellion continues with an attack on the Springfield federal arsenal.

May 25, 1787 .........................The meeting, which becomes the Constitutional Convention, opens in Philadelphia; on September 17, it ends, submitting the U.S. Constitution to the states for ratification.

July 13, 1787 .........................Northwest Ordinance enacted by the Continental Congress.

December 1787 ......................Delaware (December 7), Pennsylvania (December 12), and New Jersey (December 18) ratify the Constitution.

January–July 1788 ......................Georgia (January 9), Massachusetts (February 6), Maryland (April 28), South Carolina (May 23), New Hampshire (June 21), Virginia (June 25), and New York (July 26) ratify the Constitution.

April 1789 .........................The Electoral College chooses George Washington as president and John Adams as vice president.

September 1789 .......................Congress passes the Judiciary Act, establishing the federal court system.

May 29, 1790 .........................Rhode Island is the last state to ratify the Constitution.

December 15, 1791 .....................Three-quarters of the states ratified the first 10 amendments, the Bill of Rights, to the Constitution.

1793 .........................Supreme Court decides Chisholm v. Georgia.
March 4, 1797 .................................John Adams becomes the second president of the United States and delivers his inaugural address.

1798.................................................Adams’s administration supports the Alien and Sedition Acts, which are opposed by Jefferson and Madison.

March 4, 1801 .................................Thomas Jefferson delivers his inaugural address seeking harmony between Republicans and Federalists.
Glossary

abolition: The movement to eradicate the slavery of African-Americans.

Albany Plan: A proposal made by Benjamin Franklin in 1754 that would unite the 13 colonies but allow them to remain part of the British Empire.

amendment: An addition to a constitution that, once adopted, has the same authority as any other part of that constitution.

antifederalists: Individuals opposed to the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.

Articles of Confederation: The first national government of the United States.

bicameral: A legislative body with two distinct parts or branches.

Bill of Rights, state: The enumeration, in different forms, of certain rights defined at the state level as needing protection from governmental intrusion.

Bill of Rights, U.S.: The first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

broadside: A single sheet of printed paper, often posted in a public place.

checks and balances: The term used to describe the internal series of checks within the federal system of government established by the U.S. Constitution.

colonial agent: An individual living outside of the colony working for the colony’s interest; before and during the era of the Revolution, colonial agents working in London tried to minimize or deter any legislation that might threaten the well-being of the colony.

colonist: An individual inhabiting territory possessed by a nation and (in normal times) pledging obedience to the ruler of that nation.

Committees of Correspondence and Safety: Extralegal groups within the colonies that took it upon themselves to organize the resistance movement and, at times, to take over the actions of governing bodies.

Constitution, British: The sum total of the acts of the king and Parliament and the powers animating them. Sometimes called the “unwritten constitution,” because it cannot be found in a single place.

constitution, state: The fundamental laws of the separate states, authorized by an act of the Second Continental Congress on May 10, 1776. These documents represented efforts by each state to describe the organization of its government and typically included bills of rights.

Constitution, U.S.: Drafted in Philadelphia during the summer of 1787 and ratified by nine states by 1789, this is the “supreme law of the land” in the United States.

Declaration of Independence: The document signed by representatives of the 13 British mainland colonies south of Canada, expressing their belief in the right to govern themselves and enumerating the crimes of King George III, who is defined in the document as a tyrant.

factions: The term used to refer to a specific group of individuals motivated toward political action for their own ends. The term figured prominently in the debate about the U.S. Constitution and became one of the primary subjects of Federalist No. 10, written by James Madison.


Federalist Party: the group of individuals who coalesced around George Washington and John Adams in the 1790s; they supported a powerful federal government and such policies as the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798.

federalists: Individuals who supported the ratification of the United States Constitution after the Philadelphia convention of 1787.

House of Commons: The branch of the British Parliament that represented the people and contributed, according to 18th-century political theory, “virtue” to the governing system. Members of the House of Commons were elected.
House of Lords: The upper house of Parliament, which represented the landed aristocracy and contributed, according to 18th-century political theory, “wisdom” to the governing system. Members of the House of Lords were appointed, and many inherited their seats.

House of Representatives, U.S.: The lower house of the federal government, in which individuals are elected for two-year terms.

judicial review: The idea, finally established in the United States with the decision of Marbury v. Madison of 1803, that courts had the authority to rule on constitutional questions.

Judiciary Act of 1789: Congressional action, taken according to provisions in the U.S. Constitution, establishing the federal court system.

Loyalist: An individual who remained loyal to the king of England during (and, for many, after) the American Revolution.

Magna Carta: An act of 1215 binding the king of England into a system of laws, with subjects guaranteed certain liberties.

manumission: The act of freeing a slave.

Navigation Acts: Parliamentary legislation to regulate and tax the movement of goods within the British Empire, including the shipment of goods from the mainland North American colonies to ports in the Caribbean and Europe.

pacification: The term used to summarize the British military approach to the Revolutionary War, especially in the South, where the British hoped to quell the resistance movement.

pamphlet: A quickly produced and normally inexpensive short book; often used, as during the American Revolution, to express political ideas and arguments.

Parliament: The term for the House of Commons and the House of Lords, which together, along with the king, rule Britain and its overseas possessions.

party: A collection of individuals who seek political advantage by working together. Parties were in their formative stage during the 1790s.

petition: The document produced by individuals, in this era typically colonists, and sent to representatives with the expectation that those with political authority will be responsive to the will of the people as expressed in the petition.

philosophe: A French individual associated with the intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment; philosophes were particularly prominent during the 18th century.

Republican mother: The ideological position of a free woman after the Revolution, who was to maintain a virtuous household so that her husband and sons would possess the virtue necessary to sustain the fledgling republic.

Senate, U.S.: The upper house of the federal government, in which individuals serve six-year terms.

Sons of Liberty: The first and most prominent extralegal assemblage of colonists, who worked together to overturn (through reason or intimidation) acts of Parliament they believed were dangerous to their liberty.

standing army: An army in peacetime, often seen as dangerous by those who feared the power of the state.

statute: An act of a legislative body, which by definition, could be overturned by a subsequent legislative body possessing the same powers as the group that authorized it.

tyrant: A ruler who acted despotically and denied his subjects their rights.

unicameral: A governing system with only one legislative branch.

veto: The ability of an executive to vacate a legislative act.

writ of assistance: A generalized form of search warrant, allowing British officials to look for contraband wherever they suspected it might be found. Such writs needed to be reauthorized within six months of the death of a monarch.
Biographical Notes

Adams, Abigail (1744–1818). Primarily known as the wife of John Adams, Abigail Adams was among the most articulate letter writers of the Revolutionary age. Her letters to her husband spoke directly to the issues of gender-based inequality that continued to exist at the time of the Revolution. She believed that the best time to alter historic discrimination toward women was during this period of political ferment, letting her husband know that all men would act as tyrants to their spouses if they had the opportunity. She did not explicitly seek full political rights for women, but she did seek increased educational opportunities.

Adams, John (1735–1826). Trained as a lawyer, Adams played a central role in the resistance movement from its earliest years in Massachusetts. Despite his sympathy for the incipient rebellion, he defended the British soldiers accused of perpetrating the Boston Massacre. He served in the First and Second Continental Congress, was an outspoken advocate for independence from Britain, and became a diplomat abroad during the Revolutionary War; he was also a principal author of the Massachusetts state constitution. Adams served as Washington’s vice president before becoming president in 1796. His administration authorized the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798, but those statutes became unenforceable with the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800. He died on July 4, 1826, the same day as Jefferson and the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Adams, Samuel (1722–1803). Samuel Adams was one of the earliest and most vocal proponents of the resistance movement in Boston. He was a member of the Sons of Liberty, among other groups active in the rebellion. He was instrumental in the establishment of Boston’s first Committee of Correspondence in 1772 and ran the Boston Town Meeting that ended shortly before the Boston Tea Party. After the Revolution, he remained a public figure and advocated harsh punishment for those involved in Shays’ Rebellion.

Burgoyne, John (1722–1792). A British military official best known in America for his participation in the ill-fated campaign to divide the resistance in 1777. Burgoyne arrived back in the colonies (he had been there earlier but without his leadership position) in 1777 with instructions to lead a contingent from Canada south toward Albany. There, he was scheduled to meet Sir William Howe, who was to have led his forces northward from Philadelphia. But Burgoyne’s campaign was mired in trouble, and by the time he faced the American general Horatio Gates at Saratoga, he stood little chance of victory. He surrendered his forces there, as well as himself. The Americans released him in 1778, and he returned to London, where he became a member of the Parliamentary opposition to the American war.

Dickinson, John (1732–1808). John Dickinson, trained as a lawyer, played a crucial role in the formation of the resistance movement. He was present at the Stamp Act Congress in New York in 1765. His Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, which he wrote to protest the Townshend duties, was widely reprinted in the late 1760s. Yet despite his views, Dickinson, who was a member of the Continental Congress, opposed the Declaration of Independence, fearing that such an action would lead to the defeat of the colonists. Nonetheless, Dickinson was the primary author of the Articles of Confederation.

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790). Printer, inventor, and scientist, Benjamin Franklin was the most famous American of the 18th century, with a reputation that stretched across the Atlantic Ocean. Born in Boston, Franklin moved to Philadelphia in 1723, where he rose through the ranks of colonial society on a personal journey recounted in his Autobiography. In 1754, he proposed a plan of union of the colonies at a meeting in Albany, but nothing came of that action. He went to London to work for the colony of Pennsylvania and later became the agent for three other colonies. Franklin had sought reconciliation but, instead, was humiliated by British officials and returned to Philadelphia to serve in the Second Continental Congress, before returning to Europe on a diplomatic mission to seek an alliance with France. Replaced in 1785 by Thomas Jefferson, Franklin returned to Philadelphia in time for the Constitutional Convention, where he delivered the final speech, which was then widely distributed.

George III (1738–1820). George III was 22 years old when he became king after the death of his grandfather. Almost immediately, he shook up the coalition that had surrounded the court and tried to exert more active control over the ministry, an effort that led to instability at the highest levels of the British administration during the 1760s. Colonists eventually held him personally responsible for ignoring their petitions, which they saw as his implication in the ministerial plot to deprive them of their liberty. He authorized the military invasion of the colonies that furthered the rebellion, believing that the loss of his American territory could be the end of the empire. On that
point, George was wrong, but his actions nonetheless caused his onetime subjects to see him as a tyrant who had committed a series of actions that justified their move toward independence.

**Hamilton, Alexander** (1757–1804). Alexander Hamilton was a young man when the Revolutionary War began, but by 1777, he had risen through the Continental Army to become an aide-de-camp to George Washington. After the war, he emerged again as a public figure in the debate over the Constitution in New York, authoring many of the essays in *The Federalist* papers, including a strong defense of the idea of the federal judiciary. He served as secretary of the treasury in Washington’s administration and was a forceful advocate for the development of the American economy, even though that action put him in opposition to Thomas Jefferson, the secretary of state, who wanted America to retain its agricultural focus. He died after suffering a mortal wound in a duel with Aaron Burr in 1804.

**Henry, Patrick** (1736–1799). Patrick Henry became a member of the House of Burgesses in Virginia in 1765, just in time to protest the Stamp Act. From that moment forward, he became a leader of the resistance to British rule. Famous for his long speeches (and for purportedly stating, “Give me liberty or give me death,” though scholars cannot prove that he actually said that), Henry was a frequent advocate for his state, which rewarded him by making him its first governor after independence. His belief in the importance of state power and sovereignty led him to become one of the most outspoken and articulate of the antifederalists.

**Howe, Sir William** (1729–1814). William Howe was the commander-in-chief of British forces in America from the start of the Revolutionary War until he resigned in 1777 in the wake of the disastrous northern campaign that had led to the surrender of John Burgoyne. Howe typically commanded forces that were better trained and armed than the Continental Army, yet he never pressed his advantage. After he returned to Britain, he was accused of running a “sentimental” kind of war, incapable of delivering the kind of devastating blow that could destroy the Continental Army. Rather than dismissing Howe as an inferior military leader, it is better to understand him as a commander who knew that if he turned his troops loose, he might prevail on the battlefield but lose the battle for the hearts and minds of the American people.

**Hutchinson, Thomas** (1711–1780). Trained as a lawyer, Thomas Hutchinson rose through the provincial establishment, eventually becoming governor in 1771. But during the rebellion, his loyalty led him to become the most despised man in Massachusetts. Stamp Act rioters destroyed his house in 1765, even though Hutchinson himself was an opponent of the act but felt that as a provincial official, he had to enforce it. He left Massachusetts in 1774 and traveled to England. There, on July 4, 1776, he received an honorary degree at Oxford for his service to the empire.

**Jefferson, Thomas** (1743–1826). Best known for being the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson was also a farmer, diplomat, public official, and primary founder of the University of Virginia. During the war, Jefferson was governor of Virginia (1779–1781), and after it ended, he served in Congress (1783–1784) before representing the United States in France (1785–1789), where he learned about the social problems caused by long-term maldistribution of wealth. After he returned, he continued to serve the public, as Washington’s secretary of state and John Adams’s vice president, before his election to the presidency in 1800. Jefferson became an advocate of the expansion of the nation with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, which supported his vision of an economy and society dominated by freeholders. His Statute for Religious Freedom, which he wrote in 1777, became established in law in 1786.

**Madison, James** (1751–1836). Madison, who would eventually become the fourth president of the United States (following Jefferson), rose to prominence, not during the resistance movement, but instead, during the discussion of a new plan for a national government. He attended the meeting in Annapolis in 1786 to revise the Articles of Confederation but made his mark in Philadelphia the next year when he shaped what became known as the Virginia Plan, which laid out much of what emerged in the U.S. Constitution. He then played a determining role in the debate over the Constitution as the most important of the three authors of *The Federalist* papers. As a promise to others who feared the lack of any clear statement protecting individual rights, Madison became the primary architect of the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, now known as the Bill of Rights. Later in the decade, he used the constitutional ideas he had championed to battle the Alien and Sedition Acts.

**Otis, James** (1725–1783). James Otis, a rising star in the Anglo-American judicial establishment, turned down an opportunity to be the king’s advocate general of the Boston-based vice-admiralty court when his father, known as Col. James Otis, was passed over for a seat on the province’s supreme court. He soon took a case defending a group
of merchants who wanted to avoid having their ships searched. The Writs of Assistance case thrust Otis into the spotlight of the incipient resistance movement, where he remained as a member of the Massachusetts general court and the author of pamphlets decrying purported British violations of colonists’ rights. By the late 1760s, however, Otis began to suffer periods of insanity, which limited his role as a public figure until his death, reportedly from a bolt of lightning in 1783.

**Paine, Thomas** (1737–1809). An English-born failed artisan, Paine arrived in Philadelphia in late November 1774 and quickly became involved in the resistance movement. Fourteen months later, he published *Common Sense*, which immediately became the most celebrated and widely read pamphlet of the pre-independence period. During the war, Paine continued to write, putting his efforts toward *The American Crisis*, which appeared in 1779. In 1787, he returned to England and, eventually, to political writing with his *Rights of Man*, published in 1791 and 1792 in response to British criticism of the French Revolution. Paine moved to France, published *The Age of Reason*, served a stint in the Luxembourg Prison, and finally returned to the United States in 1802, where he faded from public view on a farm in New Rochelle, New York. He died there in 1809.

**Warren, Mercy Otis** (1728–1814). As the sister of James Otis, it was perhaps not surprising that Mercy Otis Warren would take the side of the resistance in the move toward independence. But she achieved fame as the author of one of the earliest accounts of the *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*, which was published in three volumes in 1805. Though she was also a playwright, having written *The Adulateur* in 1773 and *The Group* in 1775, she is best known for the vigorous and highly charged prose of her *History*. Like other historical writers of her age, she often focused on the personalities of those involved and created a devastating portrait of Thomas Hutchinson.

**Washington, George** (1732–1799). Washington first emerged on the public scene as a young military officer in the run-up to what became the Seven Years’ War, but he found lasting fame as the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, which he led through virtually the entire war. His letters to Congress during the war provided both progress reports and included repeated requests for supplies. He kept the army together during its darkest days, when the British defeated his forces around New York and again at Brandywine and Germantown before the gloomy winter at Valley Forge. But Washington was capable of great military strokes, too, none more famous than his raids on Trenton and Princeton. When the last British soldiers finally departed New York in 1783, he went to Annapolis and resigned his commission. Six years later, he emerged as the first president of the United States and returned to private life after two terms, establishing a precedent (not yet in the Constitution) that remained in place until the 20th century.
Essential Reading:


Ammerman, David. *In the Common Cause: American Response to the Coercive Acts of 1774* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1974. The most useful study of the emergence of the extra-legal committees that provided the infrastructure for the rebellion.

Anderson, Fred. *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754–1766*. New York: Knopf, 2000. This monumental book considers the Seven Years’ War, often known as the French and Indian War to Americans, in its global context. It is a masterpiece of historical research.


———. *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967; enlarged edition, 1992. This Pulitzer Prize–winning account is the most important single book ever written about the American Revolution and the foundational text for much of this course. No other historian has so successfully explained the sources of the ideas that propelled the Revolution forward.

———. *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974. Bailyn followed his landmark *Ideological Origins* with this study of Hutchinson, one of the most reviled figures during the period of the Revolution. The Hutchinson who emerges in this sympathetic study, which won the National Book Award, bears little resemblance to the caricatures offered by his contemporary enemies.


Bodle, Wayne K. *The Valley Forge Winter: Civilians and Soldiers in War*. University Park, Pa.: Penn State University Press, 2002. This volume presents a detailed and poignant study of some of the darkest days faced by Washington’s army.

Brewer, John. *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976. While many American historians were deep into their discussion of the American Revolution during the bicentennial, the British historian Brewer produced this account, which explained how politics actually worked at the moment when the imperial system began to fracture.

Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Calloway’s book, which consists primarily of a series of chapters focused on particular regions, demonstrates that the Revolution was not a single event for natives but, rather, an affair that was often characterized by local concerns, including preexisting relations between Indians and their neighbors.

the more provocative works produced by the bicentennial, Christie and Labaree did just that, and their book is a reminder of how one’s perspective can change depending on the angle of the historian’s vision.

Crèvecoeur, Hector St. John de. *Letters from an American Farmer*. First published in 1782; available in multiple editions. Crèvecoeur’s essays, especially his “What is an American?” have become crucial documents in our understanding of the American character in the 18th century.

Crow, Jeffrey J., and Larry E. Tise, eds. *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978. This collection of articles looks at the ways in which the Revolution altered the lives of diverse populations of southerners, including superb essays on regional political culture (by Jack P. Greene), women (by Mary Beth Norton), military strategy (by John Shy), and slavery (by Peter H. Wood).


Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency: George Washington*. New York: Knopf, 2004. Ellis uses his extraordinary talents to explain the life of Washington, a man whose history is so encrusted with myth that the individual beneath has been hard to locate.

Farrand, Max. *The Framing of the Constitution of the United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1913. Though Farrand’s book is now almost a century old, it remains a superb account of the debates in the Philadelphia convention. Farrand was also the editor of the most detailed accounts of the convention (see Supplementary Reading, below).


Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography*. Edited by Louis P. Masur. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1993. Franklin’s book can be found in many editions; this edition has the benefit of including an excellent introduction and a series of images of Franklin which show the evolution in both his appearance and the ways that others understood him during his long life and career.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. This collection includes Geertz’s work on the nature of ideologies, which has shaped the way that the term is used in this course.


Greene, Jack P. *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Polities of the British Empire and the United States, 1607–1788*. New York: Norton, 1986. In this study of political culture across the British Empire, Greene shows that it is crucial to set American developments into a wider context, even when American historical forces seem to be *sui generis*. 


Hamilton, Alexander, John Jay, and James Madison. *The Federalist*. Edited by Jacob E. Cooke. First published as a series of articles signed by “Publius” as part of the debate on the Constitution in the state of New York, *The Federalist* papers were soon published as a book and have probably been in print ever since. There are many editions now available of this fundamental text, which is frequently assigned in classes and has been cited numerous times in court decisions. This definitive edition includes excellent notes explaining key portions of the text.

Hinderaker, Eric, and Peter C. Mancall. *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. In this study of the colonial hinterland, Hinderaker and Mancall argue that many of the problems of the 1760s arose because of British efforts to exert control over the American backcountry.


Kammen, Michael. *A Rope of Sand: The Colonial Agents, British Politics, and the American Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968. This is a vibrant study of the individuals who played a crucial role in maintaining communication between London and the mainland colonies. As Kammen demonstrates, colonial agents were crucial in the workings of an often precarious political system.

Kerber, Linda. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1980. This is a landmark book that illuminates the ways in which the Revolution altered the lives of women. Kerber put forward the concept of the “republican mother,” which has been widely embraced by other scholars.

Kurtz, Stephen G., and James H. Hutson, eds. *Essays on the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1973. As the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence approached, many scholars turned their attention to issues raised by the Revolution. This volume, the product of a symposium in 1971, brings together some of the leading scholars of that age; the papers they produced remain central to our understanding of the era.

Locke, John. *Two Treatises on Government*. Edited by Ian Shapiro. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003. Locke’s *Two Treatises* has been reprinted many times, a sign of the importance of his views to all subsequent discussions about the nature of the state and its relation to those who live within it. Though Locke wrote in the late seventeenth century, his views had a powerful effect on the American revolutionaries. This edition has the benefit of including his “Letter Concerning Toleration.”

Maier, Pauline. *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*. New York: Knopf, 1997. Maier, whose study of the opposition to England propelled her into the front ranks of Revolutionary historians, has here written a penetrating analysis of the most sacred text in the American canon. A detailed account about the processes through which the Declaration of Independence emerged and then became a crucial document in American history.
and culture. As in her other work, the great strength of this book lies in Maier’s deep immersion into the kinds of primary source materials that give life to long-dead and often obscure historical actors.


Marshall, P. J., ed. *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. By providing a comprehensive picture of the entire empire during the 18th century, the essays in this volume help situate the American movement for independence into a larger British world. Excellent essays touch on the far-flung parts of the empire and include several that are directly about the American scene.

Morgan, Edmund S. *Benjamin Franklin*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. Morgan’s biography of Franklin is based entirely on his reading of the luminary’s papers, which he places in the context of his deep understanding of early American history. The book is frequently poignant and allows Franklin to speak for himself across the centuries.


Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense and Related Writings*. Edited by Thomas Slaughter. Boston: Bedford Books/St. Martin's Press, 2001. First published in 1776; available in many editions. Paine needs to be read to be understood, and all modern readers should celebrate the fact that his words can be found easily. More than 200 years later, *Common Sense* still has the capacity to shock.

Rakove, Jack. *The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress*. New York: Knopf, 1979. Rakove dug deep into the records of the first national government to produce this book, the most thorough and persuasive of any account of the rise of the national government, primarily in the 1770s.


Stone, Geoffrey R. *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime from the Sedition Act of 1789 to the War on Terrorism*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004. Stone’s remarkable and chilling book demonstrates how the federal government has often believed it necessary to curtail free speech in times of crisis. His account serves as a warning that individual liberties have often been limited and difficult to recover.

Taafee, Stephen R. *The Philadelphia Campaign, 1777–1778*. Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 2003. This richly detailed portrait of the Philadelphia region during the decisive year of 1777–1778 shows the kinds of insights that historians can have if they turn their attention to localities in times of crisis.


Warren, Mercy Otis. *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*. Two volumes. Boston, 1805; reprint, Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1988. Warren was among the first historians to consider the American Revolution as a historical event, and her account breathes life into countless Revolutionary figures, many of whom she knew personally. The modern reprint of this book was a great boon to readers interested in the writing of history in the Revolutionary age.

Wood, Gordon. *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Viking, 2004. This is a superb study of Franklin, the most famous American of the 18th century. Wood’s focus on the process whereby Franklin became an international symbol of Americans, then contemplated life in Europe, and finally embraced his homeland is filled with fascinating details.


———. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Knopf, 1992. Wood’s successful follow-up to his study of the process of constitution-writing, this book emphasizes the changes in the ways that Americans understood—and addressed—each other. Wood makes a compelling case that the “radicalism” of the Revolution should not be sought in social or economic changes but, instead, in the creation of a democratic society out of a monarchical heritage.


**Supplementary Reading:**


Bailyn, Bernard. *Faces of Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence*. New York: Knopf, 1990. This book brings together some of Bailyn’s most important individual essays, including insightful portraits of crucial Revolutionary figures, such as Thomas Hutchinson, John Adams, and Thomas Paine, as well as a Massachusetts artisan named Harbottle Dorr who annotated Boston’s newspapers.

Bailyn, Bernard, ed. *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, Volume I: 1750–1765*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965. The pamphlets in this vital collection are crucial components in Bailyn’s study of the origins of the Revolution. The book would be listed under Essential Reading, but it is now out of print; however, it is available at better libraries.

Early American History and Culture, 1987. Just as historians had gathered together to contemplate the bicentennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1976, they did so again in preparation for the 200th birthday of the U.S. Constitution. This collection brings together thoughtful pieces not only about the Constitution itself but about American culture at the time.


Carp, E. Wayne. *To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775–1783*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984. Carp’s study discusses the fact that the Continental Army often had inadequate resources even while the fate of the independence movement relied on its abilities to win against a better-armed opponent.


Ellis, Joseph J. *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*. New York: Knopf, 1996. Ellis here offers a perceptive analysis of Jefferson less as a public statesman than as a human being, primarily by focusing on his life at certain key times, including his stints in Philadelphia in the mid-1770s, Paris in the late 1780s, and Washington during his first administration.


Horwitz, Morton J. *The Transformation of American Law, 1780–1860.* Cambridge, Mass.: 1977. Though this study is not focused on the Revolution itself, it reveals the ways in which the legal system created by the Revolution fostered economic development in the early American Republic.


Jameson, J. Franklin. *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926. This venerable study, which should be in any decent library, remains a classic analysis of the social and economic dimensions of the Revolution.


Jensen, Merrill, ed. *English Historical Documents, volume IX: American Colonial Documents to 1776.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955. Jensen’s volume, no longer in print but available in good libraries, was part of a series of English documents put out by Oxford. It remains, 50 years after it was published, an almost unparalleled source for primary materials, especially the text of important acts and state papers. If this book were still in print, it would be listed under Essential Reading, above.


Mancall, Peter C. *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995. This study of the role of alcohol in the fur and deerskin trades shows how intercultural trade shaped native communities, often to the detriment of the Indians.


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Valley of Opportunity: Economic Culture along the Upper Susquehanna, 1700–1800. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991. This study focuses on one extensive hinterland through the era of the Revolution and shows how the political movement and the changes it produced influenced life in the backcountry.


McCoy, Drew R. The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989. A poignant study not only of Madison but by some who followed him and tried to understand the nation that the Revolution had brought into existence.


Merrell, James H. The Indians’ New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1989. Merrell’s study of the Catawbas remains among the most significant efforts to understand how any native people coped with colonialism and, in this instance, how the Revolution shaped the fates of Indians who remained in the East.


Nash, Gary B. The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America. New York: Viking, 2005. In this richly detailed volume, Nash brings to life the stories of many Americans in the age of the Revolution who have been overlooked by other historians. As he suggests, radicalism could be found in many locales from the 1760s through the 1780s.


Peterson, Merrill D. Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1976. This brief but penetrating study explores relations between two of the most important and well-documented of the Founders.

Plumb, J. H. The First Four Georges. London: Batsford, 1956; reprint, London: Fontana/Collins, 1966. Plumb tried to rescue the reputations of these Hanoverians by portraying “these Georges as human beings caught in exceptional
circumstances.” Fifty years after he wrote his brief book, his reflections—especially on George III—remain worthwhile.


Schiff, Stacy. A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America. New York: Holt, 2005. This recent biography of Franklin, one of a number generated by scholars on the approach of the tercentenary of Franklin’s birth, concentrates on Franklin’s time in France during the war for independence.

Smith, Maurice H. The Writs of Assistance Case. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. This is a long and dense study of the legal aspects of writs of assistance, with particular attention to the case in Boston in 1761.


Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1990. In this book Ulrich has reconstructed the life and social networks of a midwife who practiced in Maine during the era of the nation’s founding. Ulrich’s extraordinary account, which has inspired a film, shows how persistent archival work combined with enormous energy can uncover daily life in a one-time hinterland of the United States.

Wallace, Anthony F. C. The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca. New York: Knopf, 1970. Despite the explosion of works relating to Native American history, Wallace’s description of this Iroquois Nation remains a far-reaching and imminently important account of how one native people coped with—and responded to—the challenges posed by the American Revolution.


Young, Alfred F. The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution. Boston: Beacon, 1999. Young’s account of a Boston shoemaker and his later understanding of the Revolution reveals the different ways that the great political moments of the resistance movement came to shape individual lives during and after the Revolution.

**Resources Available at Subscribing Research Libraries:**

Pennsylvania Gazette. The complete, searchable text of the most important newspaper in the Anglo-American mainland colonies in the eighteenth century.

Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (known as ECCO). Includes the full text of every book or pamphlet published in England in the eighteenth century.
Evans Early American Imprints. Includes the full text of all books and pamphlets produced in the mainland Anglo-American colonies and the early United States to 1800.

Internet Resources:
The Founders’ Constitution (http://press-pubs.chicago.edu/founders/). This is the most thorough site for materials relating to Constitutional history.
Avalon Project at Yale Law School (www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/avalon.htm). An unparalleled source for documents issued by national governments and states, including English documents dating back to Magna Carta and crucial state documents from the Revolutionary period, including state constitutions.
Adams Family Papers (www.masshist.org/digitaladams). The complete correspondence between John and Abigail Adams can be found here, along with John Adams’s Diary and his Autobiography. The correspondence between John Adams and Abigail Adams contains insights on issues large and small, including his comments during his various political positions and her observations of American life during the war and, later, as First Lady in the late 1790s.
Colonial Williamsburg (www.history.org). This site provides a virtual recreation of Williamsburg during the eighteenth century.
National Constitution Center (www.constitutioncenter.org). This site for the newly created National Constitution Center in Philadelphia provides links to many documents relating to the Founding, as well as links to sites for other aspects of the history of the most important city in the mainland Anglo-American colonies.
American Memory Project (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem). This online project of the Library of Congress presents primary sources for virtually any aspect of the American experience, with scans of over three thousand documents relating to directly to the American Revolution and its role in American culture.