

University of North Texas
Department of History

History 4480: American Colonial History
M,W 2-3:20 pm, WH #212

Dr. Chet

Office hours: by appointment (guy.chet@unt.edu).

Some colonists and colonial promoters saw England's North American colonies as a social laboratory, hoping either to replicate English society and culture or to construct an alternative to them. Such designs were invariably frustrated -- the transplantation of Europeans of various Christian denominations and Africans to lands inhabited by Indians created a social and political reality that could not be predicted or controlled. The steady demographic and economic growth of the colonies depended on the commercial activity and naval security that characterized the "First British Empire". The rejection of the mother country by its colonists was, and still is, a remarkable and curious aberration for some, while for others it was the culmination of a long-term natural progression. This course will trace the development of English society and political culture in North America. The class will examine the colonies' place in the Empire, as well as the social, cultural, economic, and political tensions between Great Britain and its American colonies. The class will evaluate to what degree these tensions can explain the acrimony of the early 1770s and Americans' willingness to wage war against the British Empire for political independence.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Developing analytical skills – understanding that historical narratives are arguments, which can and should be evaluated based on evidence.
2. Gaining familiarity with the general history of colonial and Revolutionary America.
3. Understanding competing analyses of the American Revolution.
4. Developing an independent understanding of American colonial history.
5. Developing writing skills – learning how to compose an argumentative essay, in which one formulates an analytical argument, lists relevant evidence, and then explains how the evidence supports the argument.

COMMUNICATION: Learning content will be delivered in class, and through the textbooks and reading materials posted on Blackboard. Students must use their UNT accounts to log into the course from the UNT Blackboard Learn page. To correspond with me, please use email (guy.chet@unt.edu), rather than Blackboard. It is too easy for me to miss Blackboard messages; please use email.

GRADING: During the course of the semester, students are expected to contribute to class discussion, submit reading responses, and complete 3 exams (if a student cannot attend an exam, s/he should contact me *in advance* in order to arrange a make up exam). The weekly response e-papers will not be graded (feel free, therefore, to speak freely). However, failure to submit an email response by Wednesday morning will result in a two-point penalty off your final course grade. Assignments are graded on a scale of 0 to 100, with the final course grade assigned according to the following scale: A (90-100), B (80-89), C (70-79), D (60-69), F (0-59). In

grading the exams, I pay close attention to both substance and form (grammar, spelling, and clarity). In evaluating substance, I examine whether the author has demonstrated a critical, historical understanding of the material by presenting and substantiating a thesis (a historical argument). In order to compute the final course grade, I will add the relative values of each student's number grades for the 2 midterms (30% each) and the final exam (40%).

LATE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK: Assignments must be completed by the due date for full credit. Late submissions will incur a 5-point late-penalty for the first hour, and 5 additional points for every hour thereafter.

TIME COMMITMENT: Students should anticipate at least 10 hours per week for studying materials and completing class assignments. Falling behind schedule in this course will be detrimental to a student's final grade, since the concepts covered are cumulative – not becoming proficient with information in a particular week will lead prevent a student from comprehending material delivered in subsequent weeks.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM: As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. Students are held accountable for understanding UNT's policy on academic integrity. Any violations of this policy may result in a 0 or F on the particular assignment or an F in the course.

STUDENT SUCCESS AT UNT: Students who have trouble keeping up with assignments should inform the professor as early as possible. "Succeed at UNT" provides students support services and resources for success. Moreover, the History Department's Help Center (WH #220, 940-565-4772) and the History Department Library (WH #267, 940-369-7681) are staffed by graduate students who can assist students with tutoring and essay writing advice.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with special circumstances covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Office of Disability Accommodation, and also inform the instructor of the class. Reasonable adjustments will be made to accommodate the special needs of students with disabilities where such adjustments are necessary to provide equality of educational access.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

George Tindall & David Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, vol. I. Any edition of this textbook (from the 1st edition through to the latest) is good & acceptable for this class. The full edition is preferable, but the brief edition's fine too. **If you buy a new copy (i.e. the latest edition, you should take advantage of the support website for *America: A Narrative History*. In it you'll find outlines, essays, self-evaluation quizzes, points of interest and further research etc.**

Peter Wood, *Black Majority* (0393314820).

Jack Greene, "The Glorious Revolution and the British Empire 1688-1783" [handout via Blackboard]

Chet, "Transmission of English Military Culture to America" [handout via Blackboard]

Bernard Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics* (0394708652).

Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town* (0393954595).

Alison Olson, "Eighteenth-Century Colonial Legislatures and Their Constituents," *The Journal of American History* 79:2 (September 1992): 543-67 [handout via Blackboard]

Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: England and North America

Tindal & Shi — the chapters covering the start of European colonization in the Americas up to the outbreak of the War of American Independence.

Week 3: Crossing Over

Week 4: Colonial Expansion

Wood, *Black Majority*, "Introduction", Chapters 2, 3, 7.

Week 5: Growth of the Southern Colonies

Wood, *Black Majority*, Chapters 8,9,10,11,12.

Week 6: Slave Societies in the North and South

Jack Greene, "The Glorious Revolution and the British Empire 1688-1783" [handout]

Week 7: Securing the Colonies: The Dominion of New England

Chet, "Transmission of English Military Culture to America" – **no e-response required.**

Week 8: Catch-up Week

Mid-term exam. Takehome exam handed out _____. Exam due _____, 4 pm, at guy.chet@unt.edu .

Week 9: The Colonial Democratic Tradition Reconsidered

Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics*.

Week 10: Capitalism and Republicanism

Kenneth Lockridge, *A New England Town*.

Alison Olson, "Eighteenth-Century Colonial Legislatures and Their Constituents," *The Journal of American History* 79:2 (September 1992): 543-67 [handout]

Week 11: The Church in America

Second mid-term. Takehome exam handed out _____. Exam due _____, 4 pm, at guy.chet@unt.edu .

Week 12: Catch-up Week

Week 13: The Seven Years' War

Week 14-15: Trans-Atlantic Acrimony and Resistance

Final exam handed out last day of class _____. Exam due at guy.chet@unt.edu _____.