HIST 237
Early North America

Tuesday/Thursday 10:20-11:40 am, DWNY 113

Jeffers Lennox
PAC 206
Ext. 2077

Office Hours: T/R 1:30-2:30 (or by appointment)
jlennox@wesleyan.edu

Course Overview

From the arrival of the earliest fishing ships off the coast of Newfoundland to the fall of New France at the close of the Seven Years War, North America was a site of entangled encounters. Overlapping imperial claims and the construction of new societies took place on a continent long inhabited by powerful Indigenous nations. This course will examine North America as a contested and negotiated territory in which imperial ideals were more shaped by local contexts than by the well-laid plans of European administrators. Using primary and secondary sources, we will examine major events (explorations, encounters, and wars), the rise and fall of imperial powers (French, British, Dutch, and Spanish), and the daily realities that shaped experiences in North America (trade, religion, sex, forced migrations, and disease).

Suggested Texts

Alan Taylor, American Colonies
Daniel Richter, Facing East from Indian Country
**Required Readings**

Weekly readings will be available online. I have provided direct links or DOI addresses for articles. Readings marked “E-Res” are available in the course electronic reserve folder, available via the Olin Library main page (search for HIST237, password HIST237).

**SLACK**

This course will use Slack for communication and collaboration needs. You will receive an email to join the course team and its related channels. Visit [www.slack.com](http://www.slack.com) to sign up. OSX, Windows, and Linux desktop apps available, as well as Android and iOS apps for mobile use.

**Assignments**

**Assignment #1: Black Robe review (20%) – Due 10 October**

Students will write a 5-page critical analysis of the movie *Black Robe*. Using the movie, selections from the *Jesuit Relations*, and three additional scholarly sources (NOT including class materials), you will analyze and critique the film’s portrayal of French-Indigenous relations. Your paper will be evaluated on the strength of your arguments and insights, your use of the primary and secondary sources, and the clarity of your prose.

**Mid-term test (35%) - 19 October**

The mid-term test will be open book. You will answer two essay questions (there will be options). Each answer should include material from the lectures and the class readings.

**Assignment #2: Reading Response Paper | WEEK 13 (35%) – Due 28 November**

- Students will complete a 7-page reading response that analyzes a thematic question ([POSTED ON SLACK ASSIGNMENT PAGE](#)) related to our weekly readings. Your response should include the following: a general thesis statement related to the question; a coherent analysis of the readings that demonstrates a keen understanding of the authors’ arguments and supports your general thesis; and a critique of the articles’/sources’ strengths and weaknesses. Think of your response as a short essay in which you employ the assigned readings as your evidence. Please use Chicago citation style.

**Final test (%) - 7 December**

**Participation (10%)**

Each meeting will include a discussion period and participation is crucial. Please come to class prepared to debate, question, and discuss the weekly readings and lecture materials.
Submitting Assignments

Assignments are due in class on the due date. You may submit the paper via email to prevent a late penalty, but you must also provide a hard copy.

Late submissions will be penalized at 5% per day (including weekends).

Please consider using Dropbox, Google Drive, or another cloud-based server. In this day and age, computer crashes are extremely weak reasons for late submissions!

Plagiarism & Honour Code

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Please familiarize yourself with Wesleyan’s plagiarism policy and Honour Code here:
http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/plagiarism.html

http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/honorboard/honorcode.html

When in doubt, cite. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Lecture Calendar

Week 1 (5/7 Sept)

Lecture 1 – Introduction and Overview

Lecture 2 – Indigenous North America
Readings:
1. Pauketat, “Cahokia: A Pre-Columbian American City”

Week 2 (12/14 Sept)

Lecture 1 – European Explorers
Readings:
1. Jennings, The Invasion of America ch. 1-3 (E-Res)

Lecture 2 – Spanish Invaders
Readings:
1. Hernan Cortés second letter to Charles V, 1520
2. Elliott, “Intrusion and Empire” in Empires of the Atlantic World (ch. 1)
Week 3 (19/21 Sept)

Lecture 1 – Spain and New Netherland
Readings:
2. “From Dutch to Drawings” New York Times excerpt of Into Mohawk Country

Lecture 2 – English and French Efforts
Readings:
2. Champlain, “Carte de la Nouvelle-France”
3. John Smith, “Virginia”

Week 4 (26/28 Sept)

Lecture 1 – Indigenous Trade and Alliance
Readings:

Lecture 2 – New France
Readings:

Week 5 (3/5 Oct)

Lecture 1 – Film: Black Robe
Readings:

Lecture 2 – New England
Readings:
1. Greene, “Two Models of English Colonization, 1600-1660,” in Pursuits of Happiness
Week 6 (10/12 Oct)

Lecture 1 – Virginia
Readings:

Lecture 2 – Spanish America
Readings:

Week 7 (17/19 Oct)

Lecture 1 – The Middle Colonies

Lecture 2 – TEST

Week 8 (26 Oct):

Lecture 1 – Restoration & Royal Colonies
Week 9 (31 Oct / 2 Nov)

Lecture 1 - Rebellions and Revolts
Readings:

Lecture 2 – 1688 in North America
Readings:

Week 10 (7/9 Nov)

Lecture 1 – Labour and Slavery
Readings:
1. Morgan, “Patriarchs, Plain Folk, and Slaves,” in Slave Counterpoint (E-Res)

Lecture 2 – Labour and Slavery
Readings:

Week 11 (16 Nov)

Lecture 1 – Louisiana
Readings:

Week 12 (21 Nov)

Lecture 1 – The French West
Readings:

Week 13 (28/30 Nov)

Lecture 1 – Life in Eighteenth-Century North America
Readings:
2. Hämäläinen, Pekka. The Comanche Empire pp. 18-67 (E-Res)

Lecture 2 - The Seven Years’ War
Readings:
1. Anderson, The Crucible of War (Introduction)
2. Royster, “The War to Begin All Wars”

Week 14 (5/7 Dec): Conclusions

Lecture 1 – Colonial Frustrations
Readings:

Lecture 2 – TEST