

ENGL 741, Seminar in American Studies: Remembering Revolutions

Fall 2024 Tuesdays 4:00-6:50 223 Colson

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Office Hours: 213 Colson, Tuesdays 3:00-4:00 & by appointment

Overview

You know the rest. In the books you have read . . .

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “Paul Revere’s Ride”

Do you know the rest? In her classic work *On Revolution*, political philosopher Hannah Arendt differentiates “revolutions” from other “insurrections,” “civil wars,” “rebellions,” and “uprisings.” Our present moment invites us to think through Arendt’s distinction in relation to the impending 250th anniversary of the revolution of 1776, the January 6, 2021 insurrection, and other instances of political protest. In addition to Arendt, we will work with Frantz Fanon. The central question asked in different ways by these theorists is: How can violent liberation be linked to the production of ongoing freedom? We will consider this question specifically in relation to the 1776 revolution, including its impact in Indian country, attempts by enslaved peoples to claim their freedom by means of violence, and the appropriation of revolutionary rhetoric in the run-up to the Civil War. Recent critical texts will model a range of approaches to the final paper.

Required Texts. Many of the required readings are available from online sources or as PDFs linked to the syllabus. I have ordered the following books through the WVU bookstore:

Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (1963). Penguin 9780143039907

Catherine Maria Sedgwick, *The Linwoods* (1835). Harper Perennial 9780062356130

Martin Delany, *Blake, or, the Huts of America* (1862). Harvard UP 9780674088726

Recommended background/reference text: Woody Holton, *Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution* (Simon and Schuster, 2022)

Graded Work



- Eight weekly response papers (500 words). **Due 1:00 on the day of class (or earlier)**. Don’t turn one in the week you are leading the class. 5% each, total 40% of your final grade.
- Lead the class discussion one week. 10% of final grade.
- Final project including prospectus, rough draft, oral presentation, and article-length final paper (about 6000 words). 50% of final grade.

Land Acknowledgement Statement (from WVU Native American Studies program)

WVU, with its statewide institutional presence, resides on land that includes ancestral territories of the Shawnee, Lenape (Delaware), Haudenosaunee (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, Tuscarora), Cherokee, and other Indigenous peoples.

In acknowledging this, we recognize and appreciate those Indigenous nations whose territories we are living on and working in. Indigenous peoples have been in the land currently known as West Virginia since time immemorial. It is important that we understand both the context that has brought our university community to reside on this land, and our place within this long history.

We also recognize that colonialism is a current ongoing process, and as scholars seeking truth and understanding, we need to be mindful of our present participation in this process.

Policies

Late work will not be accepted. If you must miss class for any reason, including illness, and a paper is due that day, email me the paper ahead of time. In cases of debilitating illness, we will work together to devise a schedule for the completion of course work.

Inclusivity. The WVU community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. For more information on WVU's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see the DEI website <https://diversity.wvu.edu> (304-293-5600).

Accessibility. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Accessibility Services <https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu> (304-293-6700).

Sexual Misconduct. WVU does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence. (BOG Rule 1.6) It is important for you to know that there are resources available through the Title IX office if you or someone you know needs assistance: <https://diversity.wvu.edu/equity-assurance/title-ix> (304-293-5600). You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff; keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the [Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center](#) (RDVIC), 304- 292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).

Mental health concerns or stressful events can adversely affect your academic performance and social relationships. WVU offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns that you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at the Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS) website: <https://carruth.wvu.edu/>. If you are in need of crisis services, call the CCPPS main number 24/7: (304) 293-4431. Crisis services are also available through text: Text WVU to 741741 for support 24/7 from a trained Crisis Counselor.

AI. I expect that the assignments you submit to me will represent your own thinking and your own writing. If you do use a generative AI tool as part of your writing for an assignment (e.g., as a way to brainstorm or as a way to refine a research question), I expect you to cite the tool used and to attach a cover memo explaining how and why you used the tool. Failure to do so is an academic integrity violation.

8/27	Intro
9/3	Hannah Arendt, <i>On Revolution</i> (1962) Frantz Fanon, “Concerning Violence,” in The Wretched of the Earth (1963), 35-95
9/10	Phillis Wheatley Peters, “ To His Excellency General Washington ” (1775) Thomas Paine, excerpts from Common Sense (1776) Thomas Jefferson et al., Declaration of Independence (1776), from TJ’s <i>Autobiography</i> (1821) Patriot and Loyalist Songs and Ballads from the Heath anthology vol. A Joel Barlow, “ The Prospect of Peace ” (1778) Philip Freneau, “ The British Prison Ship ” (1781) Ralph Waldo Emerson, “ Concord Hymn ” (1837) Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “ The Landlord’s Tale ” aka “Paul Revere’s Ride” (1863) Russ Castronovo, <i>Propaganda 1776</i> (2014) chapter 5 & notes
9/17	Canasatego, speech July 4, 1744 , Treaty of Lancaster Francis Parkman, <i>The Conspiracy of Pontiac</i> , chapter IX (1763/1851) Joseph Brant, “ Speech of the United Indian Nations ” (1786) Red Jacket, speech at Philadelphia (1792) Hendrick Aupaumut, A Short Narration of My Last Journey to the Western Country (1794/1827) Onondaga challenge (NYT 3/15/2024) to 1794 Treaty of Canandaigua Lisa Brooks, <i>The Common Pot</i> (2008) chapter 3 & notes
9/24	William Dunlap, André (1798) Mercy Otis Warren, <i>History . . . of the American Revolution</i> (1805-07), excerpts: Boston Massacre, Boston Tea Party, committees of correspondence Washington’s farewell, Adams administration, partisan divisions, prospects Mary Jemison, <i>Narrative</i> (1824), excerpts Stephen Joyce, “Authentic-Deconstructionist Games and Tragic Historiography in <i>Assassin’s Creed III</i> ,” <i>American Literature</i> 94.1 (March 2022), 133-58 Start reading Catherine Maria Sedgwick, <i>The Linwoods</i> (1835) for the following week
10/1	Catherine Maria Sedgwick, <i>The Linwoods</i> (1835)
10/8	Washington Irving, “ Rip Van Winkle ” (1819) Nathaniel Hawthorne, “ My Kinsman, Major Molineux ” (1832) Lydia Maria Child, “ The Black Saxons ,” from <i>Fact and Fiction</i> (1849), pp. 190-204, Herman Melville, “ Benito Cereno ” (1854) Paul Downes, <i>Hobbes, Sovereignty, and Early American Literature</i> (2015) chapter 7 & notes

10/15	<p>Class meets on Zoom https://wvu.zoom.us/j/3858954753 (no password necessary), guest speaker James Greene</p> <p>James Roberts, <i>Narrative of James Roberts</i> (1858) https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/roberts/roberts.html</p> <p>William Cooper Nell, <i>Colored Patriots of the American Revolution</i> (1855): MA, DE etc.</p> <p>James Greene, <i>The Soldier's Two Bodies</i> (2020) chapter 4 & notes</p> <p>Jacob Lawrence, <i>The American Struggle</i> (1954-55) https://www.pem.org/jacob-lawrence-the-american-struggle-panels</p>
10/22	<p>Confessions of Nat Turner (1831) Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1852) Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, Declaration of Sentiments (1848)</p> <p>From <i>Echoes of Harper's Ferry</i>, ed. James Redpath (1860): Henry David Thoreau, "A Plea for Captain John Brown" Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Speech at Salem" John Greenleaf Whittier, Poem on John Brown and Controversy with William Lloyd Garrison</p> <p>Declarations of Secession (Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas, 1860-61), Avalon Project CSA Documents Henry Timrod, "Ethnogenesis," in <i>Poems of Henry Timrod</i> (1872), 100-04</p>
10/29	<p>Presentation of prospectus (not graded) Prospectus due</p>
11/5	<p>Election day recess</p>
11/12	<p>Martin Delany, <i>Blake</i> (1859-62) C19 podcast, "Reclaimed Melodies: Martin R. Delany, Joshua McCarter Simpson, and Stephen Foster"</p> <p>Begin <i>Hamilton</i> (2015) in-class viewing</p>
11/19	<p>Ishmael Reed, <i>The Haunting of Lin-Manuel Miranda</i> (2020)</p> <p>Finish <i>Hamilton</i> in-class viewing → discussion</p>
11/26	<p>Thanksgiving recess</p>
12/3	<p>Draft of final paper due Peer workshop</p>
12/10	<p>Course evaluations Presentation of final paper</p>
12/12	<p>Final paper due Thursday at midnight</p>

