

HIS191 - Violence in Colonial North America (1492-1800)



Spring 2019

Location: RR362

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday 6pm-7.15pm

Instructor: Jim Rankine

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description

Violence is a familiar presence in contemporary American life, from the dramatic impact of terrorist attacks and mass shootings to the use of force in policing to the entertainment media that we consume every day. It has also been a consistent, undeniable and crucial part of American history. In this class, we will examine North America's colonial history (1493-1776) through the prism of violence. Not only will we tackle the ways in which violence has shaped America, but also the ways that America's unique geography, demographics and history has shaped violence on this continent. Violence, its meanings and its uses, provides us with a window into the history of North America that goes beyond the narrow strip of colonial settlements on the coast, and invites us to examine transformations across the continent during this tumultuous period of change. In particular, we will examine the centrality of violence to early American history, and how it reveals a different, often surprising and confronting story of our past.

Students will engage with primary sources, secondary literature and contemporary memory and media to develop a fuller understanding of the colonial period that utilises key historical skills, and fosters shrewd analysis, thoughtful empathy and a rich historical imagination. By focusing on an aspect of America's past that has been so thoroughly deemphasised or ignored, we will discover the ways that historical narratives shape our understanding of our past and ourselves, and uncover aspects of the colonial period that have so often been glossed over, left out or silenced. In addition to a lecture series, the course will include many opportunities for students to participate in thoughtful discussion, collaborative reading and analysis and to connect the material of the course to their own lives and concerns.

Assessment

Class Participation: 20%

This includes attendance, students are granted two unexplained absences, but further unexplained absences will negatively affect this grade. Additionally, students are encouraged to engage in class discussion sessions, ask questions and contribute their thoughts, reactions and personal experiences to the shared learning experience.

Primary Source Analysis Papers: 20%

There are two primary source analysis papers, one covering the first half of our course (1492-1650) and the second covering the second half (1651-1800). I have provided a list of primary source documents for you to choose from. The analysis will cover three major questions about the source: Who produced it? How was it produced? Who was it written for? Finally, to relate the document to the theme of the course, you will examine how it related to the history of violence in North America.

Online Exhibit: 10%

Throughout the first half of the semester, we will discuss many broad trends, large scale events and patterns of historical violence. Following spring break, you will use what you've learned to identify a specific incident of violence (a massacre, war, riot, crime, or other violent event) and create a small online exhibit through Omeka that will become part of a collaborative project by the class to visualise the geography and nature of violence in North American history. This may be related to your primary source papers, or a separate incident that you found interesting, important or personally compelling.

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Both exams will have a flexible format that will allow you to choose how to best showcase your

skills and learning. Both exams will include a short essay, based on the lectures and readings which will be open-book, and distributed prior to the in-class exam. For those of you who prefer this type of exam, you may complete a second open-book essay in *lieu* of the in-class exam. For those of you who prefer the traditional exam, it will be a mixture of short answer questions regarding the concepts and historical processes and events we have discussed in class.

Major Course Themes

* Violence was a central, indispensable component of the history of colonial North America, the period cannot be understood without an appreciation for the role of violence.

* Violence in colonial North America was fundamentally unique to the conditions there, which shaped the way violence unfolded in ways that were different to conditions in Europe and elsewhere.

* Exploring history through violence forces us to develop our appreciation for historical context, cultural and social differences and encounters.

* The history of violence challenges us to reconsider our understanding of our place in history, its meaning, and the narratives of our past.

Sensitive Content Warning

This class will cover the history of violence. Be aware that this will involve learning, discussing and processing content that includes descriptions of physical violence, including sexual violence, and historical language and concepts that are profoundly offensive to our modern sensibilities. It is important that we grapple with this content seriously, thoughtfully, and respectfully. However, if you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me.

Attendance and Participation

Attending and participating in the class is important, both for your learning and for your peers. Together, we learn more effectively as collaborators and interlocutors than as isolated individuals. Participation means bringing your thoughts, skills, knowledge and ideas to class in any way you can. Participating in discussions, doing the assigned readings, and helping your classmates with your own insights and perspectives through questions or answers are all strongly encouraged, and I strive to create a classroom where everyone can find a way to do so. You are allowed **three** unexplained absences, although I strongly encourage you to attend all the classes! More absences will negatively impact your 20% attendance grade. If you are absent, **please contact me** for information about anything you may have missed.

Classroom Conduct

We are all responsible for maintaining a respectful, thoughtful and genuine atmosphere of mutual engagement in the classroom. You're all encouraged to express your thoughts, opinions, and ideas, and to agree or disagree with one another in a respectful manner. We will engage the content with critical thought, imagination, and generosity, and extend the same to one another, and together, enrich the experience for everyone.

Technology Policy

You are welcome to use laptops for note-taking, displaying readings, and other classroom activities. However, be aware that it is all too easy to be distracted or diverted! You may have to turn off devices to be fully present in discussions, lectures and class activities. If you find yourself becoming distracted, please be prepared to turn your electronic devices off.

Academic Honesty and Late Assignments

The College of Arts, Sciences and Engineering at the University of Rochester comprises a community of scholars who are committed to the pursuit of excellence in learning, teaching, creativity and research. Honesty and integrity create the conditions of trust and open communications that are fundamental to our shared endeavor. Academic honesty in the advancement of knowledge requires that all students and instructors respect the integrity of one another's work and recognize the importance of acknowledging and safeguarding intellectual property. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which the success of our community depends. Claiming authorship of another person's work or misrepresenting another person's work, with or without their knowledge and consent, are serious breaches of academic honesty and will incur serious disciplinary action. Repeated violations will be *extremely* detrimental to your grade!

If you have concerns or questions, you may consult the official policy here: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/index.html>, or better yet, contact me.

More Resources

History Department Librarian: Alan Unsworth, email: aunsworth@library.rochester.edu

Academic Assistance: I am profoundly committed to ensuring all students have every chance to thrive and succeed in the class. With that in mind, it is important to know that in addition to myself and your peers, the University provides important resources to help. The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), <https://www.rochester.edu/college/cetl/>. CETL supports undergraduate students at the University of Rochester with services that promote academic success, including course-specific collaborative study groups, study skills counseling, a study skills course, and disability support. Additionally, you may contact the Disability Services and Support Department, <https://www.rochester.edu/disability/> or the CARE Center, <https://www.rochester.edu/care/>.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1

Thursday 17th of January: Administrative matters, Introductions, "What is violence?", "What is history?"

Reading: N/A

Week 2

Tuesday 22nd of January: Violence in pre-Columbian America and Europe.

Reading: Bettina E. Schmidt and Into W. Schröder, 'Introduction: Violent Imaginaries and Violent Practices' in Bettina E. Schmidt and Into W. Schröder, *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*, New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 1-24.

'Chapter 1: Violence in the Mississippian World' in Matthew Jennings *New Worlds of Violence: Cultures and Conquest in the Early American Southeast*, Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 2011, pp. 1-28.

OR

Eduardo Aznar Vallejo, 'The Conquest of the Canary Islands' in Stuart B. Schwartz, *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 134-153.

Thursday 24th of January: 1492 - The Creation of a New World: Violence in the Columbian Expeditions.

Reading: John Cummins (ed), *The Voyage of Christopher Columbus: Columbus' Own Journal of Discovery Newly Restored and Translated*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992, pp. 93-99, 116-121, 170-174.

Week 3

Tuesday 29th of January: Conquistadores, Cortes, Violence in the Creation of New Spain.

Reading: Bartolomé Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, London: Penguin Books, 2004, pp. 14-40.

Thursday 31st of January: Resistance, Rebellion and Repression: Violent Responses to Spanish Colonisation.

Reading: Hilary Beckles, 'Kalinago (Carib) Resistance to European Colonisation of the Caribbean', *Caribbean Quarterly*, Vol. 54, Issue 4, (December, 2008), pp. 77-94.

Week 4

Tuesday 5th of February: Enslavement in Sixteenth-Century North America.

Reading: 'Caribbean Debacle' in Andrés Resendez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America*, Boston: Mariner Books Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016, pp. 13-45.

Thursday 7th of February: No Peace Beyond the Line: Pirates, Plunder, Power and Violence.

Reading: Chapter 1: Spain and the Sixteenth Century Corsairs in Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Global Piracy on the High Seas, 1500-1750, 2nd Edition*, London: Routledge, 2016, pp. 7-27.

Week 5

Tuesday 12th of February: *Entrada*: Violence in First Contact(s)

Reading: Chapter 10-11, Richard Flint, *No Settlement, No Conquest: A History of the Coronado Entrada*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013, pp. 81-93.

Thursday 14th of February: Discussion—Violence in North America 1492-1600

Reading: Images by Thodore de Bry

Week 6

Tuesday 19th of February: Jamestown and Plymouth, Violence in the English Colonial Project.

Reading: Nicholas Canny, 'The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 4, (Oct. 1973), pp. 575-598.

Thursday 21st of February: New France and New Amsterdam, Trade, Transformation and Violence.

Reading: Evan Haefeli 'Kieft's War and the Cultures of Violence in Colonial America', in Michael A. Bellesiles (ed.), *Lethal Imagination: Violence and Brutality in American History*, New York: New York University Press, 1999, pp. 17-43.

Week 7

Tuesday 26th of February: The Great Basin and the Great Plains, Trade, Transformation and Violence.

Reading: 'Spanish-Ute Relations to 1750' in Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006, pp. 16-54.

Thursday 28th of February: Unruly Colonists, Violent crimes, Violent punishments, Social Order and Disorder.

Reading: 'Chapter 7: The Riot of 1692' in R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994, pp. 125-160.

Week 8

Tuesday 5th of March: Sea of Blood: Piracy and Privateering in the 17th century Atlantic.

Reading: 'Chapter 7: The Capture of Maricaibo' in Alexander Exquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America*, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1969, pp. 141-163.

Thursday 7th of March: MIDTERM EXAM

Reading: N/A

Week 9

SPRING BREAK NO CLASSES

Week 10

Tuesday 19th of March: Blood Sugar: Plantation slavery on the Caribbean Islands.

Reading: John Donoghue, "'Out of the Land of Bondage": The English Revolution and the

Atlantic Origins of Abolition' *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 115, No. 4., (October 2010), pp. 943-974.

Thursday 21st of March: Tobacco, Rice, Indigo: Enslavement on the Atlantic littoral.

Reading: 'The Cause of Her Grief' in Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonisation in Early America*, New York: Liverlight Publishing, 2016, pp. 1-14.

Week 11

Tuesday 26th of March: Explore, Exploit, Expand, Exterminate: The Logics of Violence in Colonisation.

Reading: J. H. Elliot, 'The Seizure of Overseas Territories by the European Powers' in David Armitage (ed), *Theories of Empire, 1450-1800*, Brookfield, USA: Ashgate, 1998, 139-157.

Thursday 28th of March: Violent Resistance to Seventeenth-Century Colonisation.

Reading: 'Apostasizing from the Holy Faith: The Pueblo Revolt of 1680' in Matthew Liebmann, *Revolt: An Archeological History of Resistance and Revitalisation in 17th Century New Mexico*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012, pp. 50-67.

Week 12

Tuesday 2nd of April: Discussion: Violence in North America 1600-1700.

Reading: TBD

Thursday 4th of April: Disruption and Violence Beyond the Frontier

Reading: Robbie Ethridge, 'Global Capital, Violence, and the Making of A Colonial Shatter Zone', in Andrew Wooldord, Jeff Benvenuto, and Alexander Laban Hinton (eds), *Colonial Genocide in Indigenous North America*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2014, pp. 49-69.

Week 13

Tuesday 9th of April: A Century of War: Imperial Competition and Conflict in the 18th century.

Reading: 'Indians and the Wars for Empire, 1689-1763' in Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675-1815*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 83-110.

Thursday 11th of April: Resisting Slavery, Enforcing Slavery - Terror and Terrorism.

Reading: 'A "State of War Continued": White Fear, Black Warriors' in Kay Wright Lewis, *A Curse Upon the Nation: Race, Freedom, and Extermination in America and the Atlantic World*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017, pp. 34-58.

Week 14

Tuesday 16th of April: Prelude to Revolution, Violent Disorder in Eighteenth-Century Colonial America.

Reading: 'The Web of Seaport Life' in Gary B. Nash, *The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports*

and the Origins of the American Revolution, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979, pp. 1-32.

Tuesday 18th of April: 1776 Reconsidered: Violence, Slavery, Colonisation and the American Revolution.

Reading: Edmund S. Morgan, 'Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox', *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 59., No. 1, (Jun., 1972), pp. 5-29.

Week 15

Thursday 23rd of April: Philosophies of violence: Legitimation, Justification, Savagery and Civilisation.

Reading: Alfred A. Cave, 'Introduction' in Alfred A. Cave, *Lethal Encounters: Englishmen and Indians in Colonial Virginia*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011, pp. ix-xv.

Thursday 25th of April: Discussion -Reflections, revisions, reassessments.

Reading: N/A

Week 16

Tuesday 30th of April: FINAL EXAM

Reading: N/A