

## **HISTORY 161A: Colonial America**

M,T,W,Th 11-12:05  
HSSB 4020

Prof. A. M. Plane  
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Through close study of daily life in one early American society, this course introduces students to some of the main issues of colonial U. S. history in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. We will be examining the impact of religion, political structures, family and domestic life, the legal system, free versus slave labor, and relations between various groups of European colonists and Native Americans. In other words, this course takes students on a journey into another world--a world that was once just as lively as our own. This world was filled with love and hatred, life and death, hope and despair, learning and labor, economic opportunity and political conflict.

But every journey needs a starting point. Ours is going to be the life of one man, Samuel Sewall, and the corner of colonial America in which he made his home: the city of Boston, in the Massachusetts Bay colony, and its surrounding area. Why Samuel Sewall? Certainly he had an active and important life. He was a merchant, chief justice of the colony's superior court, father of fourteen children, and an introspective and devout Protestant. But we can study Sewall and his world because, unlike many other merchants, ministers, fathers, and government officials, he left behind a multi-volume diary which offers an incredibly detailed chronicle of his life and times (and those of his neighbors and his countrymen). Beginning with the diary and taking Samuel Sewall as our guide, we will read a series of books that will help us to build a deep and rich context in which to understand the events, feelings, and attitudes revealed in the diary. In short, we will be pursuing a form of historical ethnography in this class, getting to know our guide to foreign parts and trying to come up with as complete a picture as we can of the development of this colonial American society. Class meetings will also offer opportunities for comparison and contrast of Sewall's New England with other regions of the colonial world. Students will be immersed in this foreign culture, and will emerge with a solid understanding of some of the main themes in colonial American life. Discussions, papers, and other assignments will help students to develop an advanced understanding of how historians work with historical documents to create an understanding of the past.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

There are six textbooks for this class. All texts are available for purchase at the bookstore. I will put copies of each of the required texts on reserve at the RBR in Davidson Library, but you should plan on buying your own copy of each of these

required readings. All exams and writing assignments are based on the materials in these texts, as well as other information presented in class.

Demos, John P. *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*.  
New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

Hall, David D. *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: popular religious belief in early New England*. New York: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Lepore, Jill. *In the Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity*.  
New York: Random House, 1998.

Piersen, William. *Black Yankees: The development of an Afro-American Subculture in eighteenth-century New England*. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1988.

Ulrich, Laurel Thatcher. *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England. 1650-1750*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980.

Yazawa, Mel, ed. *The Diary and Life of Samuel Sewall*. New York: Bedford Books, 1998.

## GRADING:

Your grade depends upon your participation in the class and completion of the written work and examinations. Daily attendance at class meetings is required. You **MUST** complete the papers with passing grades in order to earn credit for this class, irrespective of your grade based on participation and the final exam.

20% attendance, discussion, in-class work, participation  
20% 3-4 page diary analysis  
25% 6-7 page book review and comparison  
30% final examination

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:

WEEK ONE: Puritan Society: Men, Women, and Families

READINGS (COMPLETE BEFORE CLASS MEETING):

Mon., June 25: Introduction; Sewall Diary, pp. 1-24; 63-81.

Tues., June 26: Ulrich, pp. 3-67

Wed., June 27: Sewall Diary, pp. 82-102; Ulrich, pp. 68-105

Thurs., June 28: Ulrich pp. 106-163, 237-41.

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WEEK TWO: Religion and Society

READINGS

Mon., July 2: Sewall Diary, pp. 24-59; Hall, pp. 3-70

Tues., July 3: Sewall Diary, pp. 102-135; Hall pp. 71-116;

Wed., July 4: HOLIDAY—NO CLASS

Thurs., July 5: Hall, pp. 117-212;

\*\*\***THURS--BRING IN ONE BLUE BOOK**\*\*\*

**Group #1/Assignment #1 DUE FRIDAY JULY 6; 3 pm, my office or history office.**

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WEEK THREE: Challenges to Puritan Dominance

READINGS

Mon., July 9: Sewall Diary, pp. 136-160; Hall pp. 213-245

Tues., July 10: Lepore, pp. ix-xxiii; 3-68;

Wed., July 11: Lepore, pp. 71-149;

Thurs., July 12: Lepore, pp. 150-170; 227-240

**Group #2/Assignment #1 DUE FRIDAY JULY 13; 3 pm, my office or history office.**

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WEEK FOUR: Power and Empire

READINGS

Mon., July 16: Sewall Diary, pp. 161-185. Demos, pp. 3-39.

Tues., July 17: Demos, pp. 40-99.

Wed., July 18: Demos, pp. 100-166;

Thurs., July 19: Demos, pp. 167-214.

**Group #1/Assignment #2 DUE FRIDAY JULY 20; 3 pm, my office or history office.**

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WEEK FIVE: Race and Nation

READINGS:

Mon., July 23: Sewall Diary, pp. 186-206; Demos, pp. 215-252.

Tues., July 24: Sewall Diary, pp. 206-223; Piersen, pp. ix-xii; 3-36.

Wed., July 25: Selling of Joseph (Handout); Piersen, pp. 37-61; pp. 87-113.

Thurs., July 26: Piersen, pp. 117-160.

**Group #2/ Assignment #2 DUE FRIDAY JULY 27;3 pm, my office or history office.**

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WEEK SIX: Reading and Remembrance

READINGS

Mon., July 30: Sewall Diary, pp. 224-242; Piersen, pp. 65-86

Tues., July 31: Hawthorne story (Handout);

Wed., Aug. 1: STUDY AND REVIEW

**Thurs., Aug. 2: FINAL EXAM (In-Class)**

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## **PAPER ASSIGNMENTS:**

There are two assignments for this class—a short paper analyzing the contents of the diary, and a longer paper comparing and contrasting two of the books for the class. Students will be assigned to Group #1 or Group #2. I will NOT accept late papers.

### **PAPER ASSIGNMENT #1: Diary Analysis**

**1000 words (approx. 3-4 pages, typed, double spaced)**

#### **ASSIGNMENT:**

Take one entry, group of entries, or theme from the diary selection for the week that relates closely to the secondary reading (either Ulrich or Hall). Describe the contents of the entry or entries you chose. Why is this entry, series of entries, or theme important? Be sure to note both why it was important to Sewall, and also why it is important for the modern historian (Ulrich, Hall, Professor Plane and/or yourself). You should bring in class materials (data, materials from discussion, our secondary readings) to help build a context for the diary entry or entries, and to explain your answer. What do we learn from close reading of this part of the diary? Remember: read the diary like you would a piece of literature—not as simply a neutral record of the day's events.

### **PAPER ASSIGNMENT #2: Comparative Analysis**

**1500 words (approx. 6-7 pages, typed, double spaced)**

#### **ASSIGNMENT:**

Choose an incident, event, or theme from the diary. Write an essay that compares and contrasts how any TWO of the modern authors we have read would interpret that incident, event, or theme. You may choose any two of the secondary readings, except Ulrich (if you are in group 1) or Hall (if you are in group 2). Would the two authors differ in their reading of your chosen incident, event, or theme or would they substantially agree? Why or why not? Defend your answer by using specific evidence, quotations, or arguments drawn from each book.

It may be helpful to answer the following questions before you start:

What view do we get of early New England in each book?

Do these views differ, and why or why not?

What is the thesis of each author?

Why did each author undertake to write a book on his/her chosen subject?

What sources of evidence do they explore in creating their account?

#### **PLEASE NOTE:**

In formulating your papers, be sure to include very brief quotations from the relevant sources, facts from lecture and your textbooks as support for your answer.

All scholarly and University of California rules regarding plagiarism apply: the ideas, words, quotes, or any other material taken from an outside source must be cited in a proper reference note at the foot or the end of the paper. For assistance, see me or see

any standard manual of style--like the Chicago Manual of Style, Kate Turabian's *Guide to writers of dissertations and theses*, or any other standard manual.

The Writing Lab on campus (building 300) offers free assistance to any student with any assignment--I recommend it to all. Even if you are a strong student, it is very helpful to get the suggestions and comments of writing consultant.