

History 6687

History of New England

Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. Daniel K. Williams

Office Hours: TLC 3207

Mon., 2-5pm

Wed., 2-5pm

Thurs., 2-4pm

(and by appointment)

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Class Location:

TLC 3205

Mon., 5:30-8:00pm

Description:

How does a region acquire a particular cultural identity? This is the central question we'll examine in this course as we seek to determine what made New England – the region comprising the states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine – a unique geographical location, with a distinctive culture and regional identity that set it apart from the rest of the nation. Though today it comprises less than 5 percent of the American population, New England has always had an outsized influence on the nation's culture, as well as a unique culture of its own. The home of many presidents, from John Adams to John F. Kennedy, as well as several of the nation's most elite colleges, New England has never been far removed from the nation's political, literary, and intellectual life. But it has often been a misunderstood region, and parts of it have been largely isolated from the rest of the United States.

To trace the influences on New England's cultural identity, we will read and discuss a wide variety of books, with each class session focusing on a different work. Some of these books are academic monographs on social history, while others are biographies or books written by journalists. In each case, I have tried to select books that are well written and that cover topics that focus on the aspects of New England history that had the greatest influence on shaping its cultural identity. We will approach the class readings chronologically, beginning with three books on the 17th-century Puritans and the people groups who preceded them, and continuing with several books on the Revolutionary War era, 19th-century industrialization, the Irish immigration of the 19th century, and tourism in the late 19th and 20th centuries. We will also explore special topics, such as slavery and race relations in New England and the unique cultural identity of New England's wild northeastern frontier.

Classes will consist partly of short interactive lectures and partly of seminar-style discussion sessions, which will give you the opportunity to interact with your colleagues, explore new

points of view, ask questions, and present your interpretations of the readings. Most class sessions will focus on the discussion of a particular historical monograph.

Learning Outcomes:

- Formulate and defend a historical argument in Standard English.
- Conduct original historical research.

Assessment:

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Class participation (including weekly emails)	25%
Research presentation	10%
Research paper	35%
Midterm exam essay	15%
Final exam essay	15%

There will be no opportunity for extra-credit assignments in this course. Late penalties will apply to all assignments submitted after the deadline, and there will be no opportunity to make up assignments or submit late work after the due date for the final exam essay.

Grading Methodology: This university does not use a plus / minus grading system, but during the course of the semester, I will use plus / minus grades, as well as split-letter grades (e.g., an A- / B+), in order to evaluate students' written work with precision. In computing final course grades, I convert all grades into numeric scores according to the following system:

A = 95

A/A- = 94

A- = 92

A-/B+ = 90

B+ = 88

B+/B = 87

B = 85

B/B- = 84

B- = 82

B-/C+ = 80

(A similar pattern is used for grades in the C-range).

In computing final course grades, a grade average of 89.5 or higher converts to a course grade of A, a grade average between 79.5 and 89.49 converts to a course grade of B, and a grade average between 69.5 and 79.49 converts to a course grade of C.

A-range grades, including the grade of A-/B+, are reserved for work that is of exceptional quality. In order to receive an A-range grade on an essay assignment, a student's essay must show evidence of original thinking and a thorough understanding of the relevant sources on the topic, as well as good writing technique. Papers that receive a grade of 90 or above must be cogent and persuasive in their argumentation, and they must be well written and tightly

organized around a strong thesis. In short, a paper that receives an A-range grade not only meets the basic requirements for the assignment, but also demonstrates that a student has mastered the interpretative, analytical, and writing skills expected for a course at this level.

B-range grades are given to essays that demonstrate a student's accurate understanding of the material, adequate use of the relevant sources, and competence in writing. They rarely contain the sophisticated analysis required for an A-range essay, but they meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

C-range grades are given to essays that contain factual inaccuracies, errors in interpretation, inadequate use of the relevant sources, or poor writing technique, even though they usually meet most of the basic requirements for the assignment.

Failing grades are assigned to work that does not meet the requirements and expectations for the assignment.

Exam essays: You will take two take-home exams in this course. You will receive the midterm exam essay question on September 30, and you will have until 11:59pm on October 15 to submit an 8-10 page essay in response to that question.

The take-home final exam will also require you to respond to an essay question. I will give you the exam question on November 18, and you will have until 11:59pm on December 9 to complete an 8-10 page essay in response. Both the midterm and final exam questions will be broadly based, and they will test your ability to synthesize information from a broad range of assigned readings in this course to support a historical argument and demonstrate your knowledge of the themes covered in this class.

Research paper: You will be expected to write a 15-20 page research paper on any aspect of New England history from the 17th century to the present. Your paper should be connected to the theme of the regional cultural identity of New England. In other words, though your topic might be relatively narrow (e.g., a specific question related to the Salem witch trials or the biography of a particular individual), it should connect in some way to the broader theme of the cultural identity of the region. Alternatively, you may instead write a paper on how people from another region interacted with New Englanders or were influenced by New England, as long as you connect your paper to the issue of New England's cultural identity. For example, you might choose to write about Booker T. Washington's interaction with "Yankees" from New England. You could write a paper about how Malcolm X's experiences as a young man in Boston influenced his view of race relations and the development of his political philosophy. Or, you might write a paper comparing and contrasting southern textile mills with the textile industry in New England. The possibilities are almost endless.

You should choose the topic for your research paper and submit a brief (approximately two-paragraph) proposal by September 9. Your proposal should briefly describe the questions you intend to address in your paper, the reasons why you chose this topic, the relationship of your topic to broader themes of New England regional identity, and your plans for completing the research for your paper. Your plan should list the type of primary sources you intend to examine

and your projected schedule for completing this research. Your bibliography is due by September 23. The first draft of the paper (which must be at least 10 pages long) is due on November 22, and the final 15-20 page version is due on December 6. For more information on this assignment, please see the assignment guidelines posted on CourseDen.

Papers that are turned in after the assigned date will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are overdue.

Research presentation: On November 18, you will give a 10-minute research presentation summarizing the main points of your research paper. Your presentation should be delivered in the style of a conference paper presentation. You should discuss the central questions that your paper examines, briefly survey your research methodology and the place of your argument in the historiography of your topic, and give your audience a clear sense of your paper's central arguments and the narrative that it presents. There will be a short question-and-answer session following each paper presentation. A primary purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to practice presenting your research to your colleagues, but I also hope that the assignment may give you some useful feedback that you can use in finalizing and revising your paper.

Plagiarism policy: Plagiarism, which is the presentation of someone else's words or ideas as your own, is a serious offense that will not be tolerated. It should go without saying that all papers that you write in this course must be your own work. Any students who are caught copying words or ideas from another student's work, a website, a textbook, or any other source, and presenting these words or ideas as their own work without proper attribution, will be charged with plagiarism. Students who have engaged in academic dishonesty will automatically fail this course and will be reported to the university administration for possible further disciplinary action.

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to properly cite sources, please ask, because I will be happy to provide explanations. Ignorance is not an excuse for plagiarism; it is your responsibility to read the materials on plagiarism that are posted on the websites listed in this syllabus and presented in other materials assigned in this course, and to take all necessary steps to avoid plagiarizing someone else's work.

The UWG history department's policy on plagiarism, which comes from the American Historical Association, can be found here: <https://www.westga.edu/academics/coah/history/plagiarism-statement.php>. As this document states, "Any use of the ideas, information, or words of anyone else, including paraphrasing of the words and ideas, without crediting them is plagiarism and is a crime. A direct quote of the words (even only a few words) of someone else must be in quotation marks as well as have a note indicating its source."

More information about the university's honor code and the consequences for violating it can be found here:

https://www.westga.edu/academics/assets/docs/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf.

All of your written work for this class must be original; you are not allowed to submit essays that you have written for other courses or that you have completed prior to this semester.

Class participation and weekly emails: Since class sessions in this seminar course will consist mainly of class discussion, your participation in those discussions is crucial to the success of this course. It is imperative that you come to class prepared to talk about the assigned reading each week. I will determine your class participation grade at the end of the semester based on my perception of your level of preparedness for each class session, your willingness to participate in the discussion, and the perceptiveness of the comments that you make throughout the duration of this course. I understand that some students may be more inclined than others to speak up in class, but I hope to create an environment that will allow everyone, regardless of their personality or background, to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts on the readings. If you find yourself reluctant to join in the conversation for any reason, or if you feel that your class participation level does not adequately reflect your knowledge of the material and preparation for class, I would encourage you to meet with me early in the semester to discuss strategies that will enable you to succeed in earning a class participation grade that accurately reflects your work.

In addition, as part of your class participation, you should send me an email each week that assesses that week's assigned book. (Please send these weekly emails to my university email address: dkw@westga.edu). Your email, which is due at noon on each class day throughout the semester, should consist of approximately two or three paragraphs that identify the main argument of that week's assigned book and its relationship to larger themes in the course. The short email essay should give a brief synopsis of your assessment of the book's argument or other aspects of the book that you found intriguing, and it should conclude with three suggested questions for class discussion. I will compile these responses and email them to the class approximately four or five hours before each class discussion, so you will be able to come to class with some idea of the questions that we might be discussing and the viewpoints of some of your colleagues in the class.

Class communication: I may send out periodic email communiqués to students in this course, so please check your UWG email account regularly. The university administration has stipulated that all email communication between faculty and students should take place on UWG email accounts, so please use your UWG email account for all electronic communications that you send me.

To protect students' privacy rights, I will not return graded papers to any third party (e.g., a student's friend or relative who asks to pick up a student's work on that person's behalf) unless a student gives me permission in writing (e.g., an email) to do so. There are occasions when I must disclose a student's grade to university administrators or other history department faculty (e.g., the department chair, students' advisors, or the graduate studies coordinator), but in all other cases, I will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of students' grades.

I would like to do whatever I can to help you succeed in this course. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have a question about any subject pertaining to this class. I make it a priority to respond promptly to emails from students, and I am happy to talk with students during my office hours, so please feel free to stop by my office anytime that you want to discuss your

concerns about this course. I believe that this will be an excellent semester, and I'm pleased to welcome you to this class.

Assigned readings: The assigned books for this course are available at the university bookstore, but you may be able to purchase these texts at lower prices from an online retailer such as Amazon. I have listed the ISBN and publication information for every assigned text so that you can order the correct editions. The prices given are for new editions on Amazon. You may be able to purchase used editions at a substantially lower cost.

Joseph A. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0801882548. \$17.62. (Used copies start at \$1.50).

Nathaniel Philbrick, *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War*. New York: Penguin, 2006. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0143111979. \$10.95. (Used copies start at \$0.25).

Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692*. New York: Vintage, 2003. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0375706905. \$14.40. (Used copies start at \$1.37).

Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2016. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1631493249. \$12.88. (Used copies start at \$4.25).

Woody Holton, *Abigail Adams: A Life*. New York: Atria, 2009. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1416546818. \$10.43. (Used copies start at \$5.84).

Colin Woodard, *The Lobster Coast: Rebels, Rusticators, and the Struggle for a Forgotten Frontier*. New York: Penguin, 2004. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0143035343. \$14.40. (Used copies start at \$1.56).

William Moran, *The Belles of New England: The Women of the Textile Mills and the Families Whose Wealth They Wove*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2002. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0312326005. \$13.91. (Used copies start at \$2.35).

Joseph A. Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0807849378. \$37.50. (Used copies start at \$14.62).

Joan D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0195096392. \$22.98. (Used copies start at \$5.99).

Thomas H. O'Connor, *The Boston Irish: A Political History*. Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997. Paperback. ISBN: 978-0316626613. \$14.07. (Used copies start at \$2.67).

Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 1997. Paperback. ISBN: 978-1560987994. \$15.49. (Used copies start at \$5.00).

Class Schedule:

(Please complete each assigned book before class and submit your email analysis by 12pm each class day).

- 8/19 New England and the Shaping of Regional Identity: An Introduction
- 8/26 The Beginning of New England
Reading assignment: Joseph A. Conforti, *Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006)
- 9/2 No class (Labor Day)
- 9/9 Pilgrims and Puritans
Reading assignment: Nathaniel Philbrick, *Mayflower: A Story of Courage, Community, and War* (New York: Penguin, 2006)
Research paper topic proposal due (submit in class)
- 9/16 The Salem Witch Trials
Reading assignment: Mary Beth Norton, *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (New York: Vintage, 2003)
- 9/23 Slavery in New England
Reading assignment: Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2016)
Research paper bibliography due (submit in class)
- 9/30 Women in Eighteenth-Century New England: A Case Study
Reading assignment: Woody Holton, *Abigail Adams: A Life* (New York: Atria, 2009)
- 10/7 Downeast Maine: A New England Frontier
Reading assignment: Colin Woodard, *The Lobster Coast: Rebels, Rusticators, and the Struggle for a Forgotten Frontier* (New York: Penguin, 2004)
- 10/14 Industrial New England
Reading assignment: William Moran, *The Belles of New England: The Women of the Textile Mills and the Families Whose Wealth They Wove* (Thomas Dunne Books, 2002)
- 10/15 **Midterm exam essay due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**
- 10/21 The Imagined Past of Genteel New England
Reading assignment: Joseph A. Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001)

- 10/28 19th-century New England Protestant Women: A Case Study
Reading assignment: Joan D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)
- 11/4 Irish Immigrants and the Making of Catholic New England
Reading assignment: Thomas H. O'Connor, *The Boston Irish: A Political History* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 1997)
- 11/11 Making New England a Tourist Destination
Reading assignment: Dona Brown, *Inventing New England: Regional Tourism in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 1997)
- 11/18 Class research presentations
(No reading assignment)
- 11/22 **Research paper draft due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**
- 11/25 No class (Thanksgiving break)
- 12/2 New England Today
(No reading assignment)
- 12/6 **Final version of research paper due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**
- 12/9 **Final exam essay due via CourseDen by 11:59pm**