This course is designed to introduce students to what I take to be the most important themes and developments of roughly the first three centuries of American history. We will focus much more in class on ideas and processes of change than on names and dates, facts and figures. Of course, this does not mean that factual background is unimportant, for facts enable us to trace and interpret those changes. Instead of having a textbook, I will use the lectures to give background, supplemented and complemented by the readings.

Required Books:


John A. Moretta, William Penn and the Quaker Legacy (Pearson / Longman, 2007)

Thomas Paine, Common Sense and Related Writings, ed. Thomas P. Slaughter (Bedford / St. Martin’s Press, 2001)

Participation and In-Class Reading Responses:
Most days will feature some mix of lecture and discussion. The readings will form the heart of our discussions in class, so your preparation for discussions should center on these. You should bring the readings to class with you as appropriate. We will grade your participation by looking at its general pattern across the semester. Thus one or two absences will not hurt you very much, but more than that will, for if you are not in class you obviously cannot participate. What you say will matter at least as much as how much you talk.
It will be on days we discuss readings that you will write brief responses to the readings. This should prepare you for discussion as well as reward you for engaging with the readings. These will be done in the first 5-8 minutes of class on those days; if you are late and miss them you cannot make them up. They will be open book, to avoid punishing those who read ahead (see below) and to reward those who have taken good notes on/in their readings. There will be 16 of these, and 15 will count towards your grade.

Exams:
The midterm and the final will feature matching questions as well as essays of various lengths. The big essay on the final will be comprehensive.
There will be only one makeup time for the midterm and reading responses. If you miss one of these and have an excuse, you are welcome to make it up on Wed., Dec. 5, time and place TBA.

Paper:
This is a paper connecting John Winthrop’s sermon “A Modell of Christian Charity,” Morgan’s The Puritan Dilemma, and Moretta’s William Penn and in the process exploring the effects of personal experience on people’s ideals. The questions to be answered in this paper from the evidence presented in these readings are:

What political and social lessons did Winthrop and Penn draw from the Bible? How did they think the Bible told them God wanted their societies organized, their politics to run, etc.? What ideas on these issues did the early settlers in these societies seem to have drawn from the Bible?
(And the kicker:) How is it that these 4 sets of people (Winthrop, Penn, and the two groups of settlers) could have drawn such different lessons from the same Bible?

You are welcome to bring in material from other readings (the Bible seems a natural) or lecture material in the course to bolster your case, but you are not required to do so. Be sure to use all of the sources listed above, however, and to answer all the questions posed above.

The paper is to be 4-6 pages long (double-spaced) and is due Sept. 26. Meeting this page limit is important, and must be done using normal sized fonts and normal (1-inch) margins.

Turning it in on time is important: the late penalty is one half-grade per class day late. Papers turned in any time after the start of class on the due date will be considered one day late, and will be until after the start of class on Sept. 28, after which it will be two days late, and so forth. And turning them in means giving me a hard copy – emailing me a paper is not turning it in. But emailing me outlines or drafts is highly recommended in the weeks leading up to the research paper’s due date. (I will not read drafts within 2 weekdays of the due date, however.) You will likely do much better if you do this.

Good papers will:
1) Have a clear thesis statement, and then will back that thesis up with specific evidence from the historical documents and readings in question. They will make logical use of that evidence;
2) Cite their sources clearly and consistently (I don’t care about citation format as much as that you do cite consistently and clearly);
3) Avoid both plagiarism and simply stringing other sources’ quotes together. In other words, their authors will cite when they both quote and paraphrase, and those authors will provide plenty of their own analysis rather than relying too much on quotations;
4) Violate zero (0) of the Helpful Writing Hints at the end of this syllabus, and in general will approach a clarity and felicity of style that will make me as reader rejoice.

Academic Honesty:
BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct. Students are responsible not only to adhere to the Honor Code requirement to be honest but also to assist other students in fulfilling their commitment to be honest. If you have any questions about these standards, and even if you don’t think you do, I suggest you read the Academic Honesty Policy available at honorcode.byu.edu.
If I detect academic dishonesty on the paper or the exams, the offender will face a range of penalties at my discretion, from failing the assignment to failing the course.

Disclaimers:
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity receiving federal funds. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.
Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD Office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.

Class and Readings Schedule (which can change at any time – keep posted):
The readings for each class day are listed below. This listing is designed to help you keep up with the reading and to tie your reading most closely with the topics covered in lecture and discussion. Since some weeks have more reading than others, wise students will stay ahead of the prescribed schedule so they don't get crushed by the heavier weeks / days. There will also be a handout or two as the semester goes along, which will constitute short, required reading assignments in preparation for discussions. Keep in mind that doing and engaging with this reading is a vital part of the work you agree to do by taking this course.
Week 1:
Aug. 27  Introduction
        Technology social contract
Aug. 29  Old World setting: Moral Economy vs. Modernity
Aug. 31  Old World setting: Catholics vs. Protestants
         Roanoke

Week 2:
Sept. 3   NO CLASS – Labor Day Holiday
Sept. 5   Early Virginia
         Early Anglo-Indian relations
         READ by 5/2: Johnson, ed., Reading the American Past (RAP), Documents 3-1, 3-2, 4-2
Sept. 7   NO CLASS – read ahead!

Week 3:
Sept. 10  Old World setting: High Church vs. Low Church
         READ by 9/10: Morgan, Puritan Dilemma, ix-28
Sept. 12  New England: The Vision
         READ by 9/12: Morgan, Puritan Dilemma, 29-62; RAP, Doc. 4-1
Sept. 14  New England: The Reality
         READ by 9/14: Morgan, Puritan Dilemma, 63-191; RAP, Doc. 4-5

Week 4:
Sept. 17  The rise of slavery in British North America
Sept. 19  NO CLASS; attend University Forum Sept. 18 instead (more details TBA)
Sept. 21  Old World setting: Civil War and Restoration
         READ by 9/21: Moretta, William Penn, ix-69

Week 5:
Sept. 24  Pennsylvania: The Vision
         READ by 9/24: Moretta, William Penn, 70-145; RAP, Doc. 4-4
Sept. 26  Pennsylvania: The Reality
READ by 9/26: Moretta, William Penn. 146-248

*** PAPER DUE 9/26 ***

Sept. 28  Eighteenth-century colonial society
READ by 9/28: RAP, Docs. 5-1, 5-2, 5-4

Week 6:

Oct. 1  Eighteenth-century colonial society continued
READ by 10/1: RAP, Doc. 5-3

Oct. 3 and 5  Britain, her colonies, and the coming of the American Revolution
READ by 10/3: RAP, Chapter 6 (Docs. 6-1 through 6-5)

Week 7:

Oct. 8  The Revolutionary War and the contagion of liberty: Radical Ideas

Oct. 10 and 12  FILM: “Mary Silliman’s War”

Week 8:

Oct. 15  The contagion of liberty in the American Revolution: The War
READ by 10/15: RAP, Docs. 7-3, 7-4

Oct. 17  The American Revolution and religion
READ by 10/17: RAP, Doc. 8-3

Oct. 19  NO CLASS

** Take MIDTERM EXAM in Testing Center on Oct. 18, 19, or 20

Week 9:

Oct. 22  Promise and peril in the Confederation Era
READ by 10/22: RAP, Doc. 8-4
Oct. 24  DEBATE over the proposed Constitution

Oct. 26  The contagion of liberty: White manhood suffrage
READ by 10/26: RAP, Doc. 9-3

Week 10:
Oct. 29  Majority rule and minority rights
READ by 10/29: RAP, Docs. 11-1, 11-2

Oct. 31  The contagion of liberty and slavery, part 1
READ by 10/31: RAP, Docs. 8-1, 10-3, 10-4

Nov. 2  The contagion of liberty and slavery, part 2
READ by 11/2: RAP, Docs. 8-2, 9-4, 9-5, 11-4, 13-4

Week 11:
Nov. 5  Revolutions in the economy
The Second Great Awakening
READ by 11/5: RAP, Docs. 12-1, 12-2

Nov. 7  Religion and reform
READ by 11/7: RAP, Docs. 11-5, 12-4, 12-5

Nov. 9  DEBATE: Proslavery-ites vs. abolitionists

Week 12:
Nov. 12  Slavery and politics: the North-side view, part 1
READ by 11/12: Oakes, *Radical and the Republican*, 39-52

Nov. 14  Slavery and politics: the North-side view, part 2
READ by 11/14: Oakes, *Radical and the Republican*, 52-85

Nov. 16  Slavery and politics: the South-side view
READ by 11/16: RAP, 14-3
Week 13:

Nov. 19  DEBATE: The Election of 1860  
READ by 11/19: Oakes, Radical and the Republican, 87-132

Nov. 20  Optional field trip to HBLL exhibit on the Civil War

Week 14:

Nov. 26  Secession and Civil War  
READ by 11/26: Oakes, Radical and the Republican, 133-171

Nov. 28 and 30  The Civil War  
READ by 11/28: Oakes, Radical and the Republican, 173-245; RAP, Docs. 15-2, 15-3, 15-4

Week 15:

Dec. 3  Reconstruction  
READ by 12/3: RAP, Docs. 16-1 through 16-5; Oakes, Radical and the Republican, 247-288

Dec. 5  Reconstruction continued  
A Final Sermon

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2:30-5:30 p.m.
HELPFUL WRITING HINTS

Clarity and felicity of expression are things that I, your gentle reader, value highly. I know “this is not an English course, blah, blah,” but still, let me stress this point. Writing skills are among those I hope you all will hone in this course, so I hope you’ll take these tips to heart. The WRITING CENTER (http://humanities.byu.edu/english/writingcenter/) can often also help with these and other matters, and you could benefit from showing them a draft before you turn it in. Be assured there is no stigma attached to getting help on writing – we all need help, or we’d be living large off our book sales profits. To this end, here are some specific suggestions:

1) Strive for simplicity in your writing. Short, direct sentences and phrases are much better than high-falutin’ fancy-pants oratory, even in an academic paper. Trying to be fancier than necessary will almost always earn you an “AWK” (for awkward). Most problems can be avoided by being simple and direct.
2) Remember that the point of language is to communicate, not to obscure, meaning. Read back over what you’ve written to make sure you are saying what you think you are saying. Don’t assume a spell check can catch everything – it just doesn’t work that way. You may feel like a fruitcake when you do it, but if you read a paper out loud you can often catch some of the most egregious or nonsensical errors.
3) You should also enlist someone else to proofread and read for meaning, to make sure you are not leaving unsaid what needs to be said. I would also be delighted to read over drafts, outlines, etc., to help in this and other regards. (I will not read and comment on papers sent to me within two working days before a paper is due, however.)
4) Having someone else read your paper will also help you clarify points that you think are self-evident because you are closer to the subject. Keep in mind that you should assume your audience knows next to nothing about the subject.
5) Be sure your paper is a coherent essay with an introduction, body, and conclusion. You should present your argument clearly and then support it with relevant evidence. Be sure, as you construct and then read back over the essay, that one point leads logically to another, you transition between points well, etc. Logical presentation and flow will really help you present your points clearly (if you don’t, why bother?).
6) Strive for coherence within as well as between paragraphs. Remember the basics: each paragraph should have ONE (1) main idea, introduced well by a topic sentence. Topic sentences can also help in transitions between paragraphs / main ideas. The inventor of the paragraph sought to bless all our lives; honor his / her legacy in your writing.
Here are some very common problems that I trust you will look out for to keep me, your grader, friendly to your cause:

1) **The passive voice**: Avoid this like the plague. The passive voice is when the subject of your sentence has something “done to” it/him/her. A classic example of the passive voice is used in government, because it obscures the actor: “Mistakes were made.” The active voice is much better and clearer: “The CIA [or whoever] made mistakes.”

2) **Noun-verb disagreement**: When the noun is plural or the verb refers to more than one noun, the verb should be plural. Same with singular. And throughout the *whole sentence.*

3) **Incomplete / run-on sentences**: Having a natural voice in writing doesn’t *always* mean you write like you talk. Each sentence should have a noun and a verb. (For good examples of incomplete sentences, see the second and third sentences just above in #2.) Perhaps a more common problem is the run-on sentence, which can often be avoided simply by keeping your sentences simple and direct.

4) **Tense inconsistency**: Oh, the whiplash I’ve gotten over the years reading sentences or paragraphs that switch from the past to the present tense and then back again! The easiest way to avoid this in a history paper is to write in the past tense for past events. But whatever tense you choose to describe past events, *pick a tense and stick with it!*

5) **Apostrophe and quotation mark confusion**: Caused by confusing possessives with plurals. The plural does not require an apostrophe, while the possessive does. The same goes for plural possessives. Keep these things straight. So for instance, you are taking Matt Mason’s course, but are not Masons yourselves. But if you go over to the Masons’ house, . . . you get the picture, I hope. Related problems come when people aren’t clear on how we use quotation marks in the United States. Get clear on this.

6) **Overuse / underuse of the comma**: I thought this was basic stuff before I started grading student papers. Be sure you know the rules on when to use and not use a comma.

In short, English can be a nutty language, and it takes some work to keep it from being an instrument of torture for your reader. So while this is far from an exhaustive writing guide, from a purely selfish perspective I hope it will keep you from repeating some of the mistakes that have put me on the rack in times past.