

Politics in the Early American Republic
History 311.01

Prof. Sarah J. Purcell

Website: <http://www.grinnell.edu/courses/his>

Library Guide:

http://www.lib.grinnell.edu/subsplus/subjects/display.php?subject=cg_his311

Tuesday 10:00-11:50 Thursday 10:00-10:50

Mears 115

Office: Macy House 201 Phone: 269-3091 E-mail: PURCELL@grinnell.edu
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9:00-10:00 and by appointment

Please come and see me during office hours, or make an appointment, so I can meet you one-on-one. Call my office or e-mail me at any time. Because my schedule is somewhat unpredictable (because of the Rosenfield Program), appointments are always a good idea.

Students in this seminar will discover and debate recent developments in the study of political history by focusing intensely on one of its most exciting periods, the early American republic. During roughly the years 1789-1824, the American political system first took shape as federal and state governments established themselves, as the country experienced its first era of party conflict, and as philosophical ideas about the structures of American power and concepts such as "republicanism" and "democracy" were put to the test. The seminar will analyze traditional topics of political interest in this period such as political party formation and interaction among the "founding fathers," and it will also explore the many ways that recent historians have broadened their view of politics to include such factors as political culture, female involvement in politics, and the politicization of everyday life.

We will study the content of political history in the early republic, and we will also give a great deal of attention to the style, theory, and method of political historical study. While political history of the United States in the founding era is a very popular branch of historical writing, it is also often highly controversial. We will immerse ourselves in a number of hot debates about the theory and practice of political history.

Students will hone a variety of skills over the course of the semester as they engage in the process of history. While the main goal of this course is to produce an excellent research paper, students will also focus on the methods of historical research, writing, and revision. Peer review will enhance the cooperative nature of the process.

Books:

Douglas Egerton, *Gabriel's Rebellion* (1993)

Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers* (2000)

Jeffrey L. Pasley, Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher, eds., *Beyond the Founders: New Approaches to the Political History of the Early American Republic* (2004)

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th Ed. (2007)

Rosemarie Zagari, *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* (2007)

Michael Zakim, *Ready Made Democracy* (2003)

Supplemental Readings will be handed out in class and/or available on E-Reserve.

Assignments: While this course is mainly focused around the major primary research paper, students are expected to keep up with reading assignments for discussion in class. In the first half of the semester, all students will complete a short historiographical essay comparing two authors' approaches to the study of politics.

For regular class discussions (beginning Sept. 1), each member of the class must post one discussion question on the PioneerWeb discussion board for HIS311 by **7:00 pm** on Monday evenings before our Tuesday discussions.

Students will complete a series of assignments leading up to the final research paper. Preliminary topic selections are due October 6. On October 29, each student will turn in a paper proposal that outlines a proposed thesis and argument. On November 17, students will turn in a bibliography and deliver an oral presentation about one, major primary source. The research paper is due December 1, and class presentations and peer review will follow. The final, revised version of the research paper is due December 16.

All papers for this course must follow correct citation format using footnotes or endnotes in University of Chicago style. Consult your Turabian book for a guide. For more in-depth questions, you should consult *The University of Chicago Style Manual*, 15th ed., in Prof. Purcell's office or in the Library.

Grades will be assigned in the course according to the following formula:

historiography paper	15%
paper proposal	5%
bibliography	5%
primary source presentation	5%
peer review	5%
research presentation	5%
class participation	10%
Research paper	50%

Please consult and honor the rules for Academic Honesty in the Grinnell College Student Handbook.

Attendance is essential. If you must miss class or an individual meeting due to illness or for another reason, please let me know.

If you require an accommodation for any diagnosed disability, please let Prof. Purcell know during the first week of class.

Week One:

Thursday, Aug. 27 Introduction to class

Week Two: How and Why to Study Political History

Tuesday, Sept. 1: *Reading Due:* Pasley, et. al., *Beyond the Founders*, 1-28; Read endnote # 8 particularly carefully, then go online to <http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~shear> and read through the discussion logs that provided the impetus for this book; Meg Jacobs and Julian E. Zelizer, "The Democratic Experiment: New Directions in American Political History," in *The Democratic Experiment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003): 1-19 (distributed in class).

Week Three: Synthesis & Institutions: Panel Discussion (no regular discussion question due)

Tuesday, Sept. 8 : *Skim:* Elkins & McKittrick, *The Age of Federalism*; Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy* (Both on reserve); *Common-Place special "Politics Issue,"* October 2008 <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-01/>

Thursday, Sept. 10: Research Methods Lab

Week Four: Founding Fathers Chic?

Tuesday, Sept. 15: *Reading Due:* Ellis, *Founding Brothers*; *Beyond the Founders*, ch. 5

Week Five: Beyond the Founders

Tuesday, Sept. 22: *Reading Due:* *Beyond the Founders*, ch. 1&2, 8&9, 14

Week Six: Women, Gender, and Politics

Tuesday, Sept. 29: *Reading Due: Zagari, Revolutionary Backlash; Beyond the Founders, ch. 6*

Week Seven: Black Power

Tuesday, Oct. 6: *Reading Due: Egerton, Gabriel's Rebellion; Beyond the Founders, ch. 7; PRELIMINARY TOPIC DUE*

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10 5:00 PM HISTORIOGRAPHY PAPER DUE

Week Eight: Culture & Politics

Tuesday, Oct. 13: *Reading Due: Zakim, Ready-Made Democracy; Beyond the Founders, ch. 3*

Week Nine OCTOBER 16-23 FALL BREAK

Week Ten: Tuesday, Oct. 27: Topic Presentations

Thursday, Oct. 29: **PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

Week Eleven: November 3 & 5 Writing Days

Week Twelve: November 10 & 12 Writing Days

Week Thirteen: Tuesday, Nov. 17 Bibliographies Due, Source Presentations

Thursday, Nov. 19 Source Presentations

Week Fourteen: THANKSGIVING BREAK NOVEMBER 26 & 27

Week Fifteen: Tuesday, Dec. 1 **PAPERS DUE** Research Presentations

Thursday, Dec. 3 Research Presentations

Week Sixteen: December 8 & 10 Research Presentations

Wednesday, December 16 5:00 p.m. FINAL VERSION OF PAPERS DUE in Prof. Purcell's office