History & Literature 97: 12 AMERICAN REVOLUTIONS

***Draft syllabus—Readings and Assignments Subject to Change
Katherine Stevens & Jennifer Brady
Spring 2015

COURSE DESCRIPTION

How many revolutions are there in American history? One? Two? A dozen? Or many, many more? How should we count? This course samples a short span of time, the decades after the American Revolution and before the Civil War (sometimes called the “Second American Revolution”), to explore what revolution is, what counts as revolution, and how we study it. We will focus on armed revolts, spiritual resistance movements, insurrections, urban riots, separatist communes, and popular protests through the records these perhaps-revolutions left behind--epistolary novels, transcribed confessions, government legislation, letters, autobiographies, lithographs. Together, these texts and images reveal a turbulent sixty-year history and suggest questions about revolution in America. Are revolutions always violent? Are they the outcomes of change or the change itself? Who, by the way, is a revolutionary? Why are some things called a “revolt” or an “insurrection” and other things “revolutions”?

To take up these questions, the course is divided into three units, each proposing a way of understanding revolution. We begin with revolutions as “unthinkable things,” looking both within and outside the United States at major cataclysms that might most readily be called revolutions. How did these revolutionaries imagine their actions and their outcomes? The second unit explores revolution as changes to the fabric of society, asking how reconsiderations of gender, race, and class challenged the established order and produced changes that were sometimes desired and at other times unwanted and resisted. Finally, the last unit considers the relationship between resistance and revolution. When do acts of disobedience, civil and otherwise, tip over into revolution? Is it the acts or the reactions to them that make the difference? Throughout the course, we will focus on learning the methods of interdisciplinary scholarship, asking how the combination of history and literature uniquely allows us to understand revolution.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Attendance and Participation
This is a small, intensive seminar in which your regular and substantive contributions are essential. You are expected to attend class every week. Participation largely depends on preparation: you are, of course, required to do all reading and writing assignments and to come to class with all materials, including assigned texts and hard copies of texts from our course website. You should do your reading well: mark up your book, article, etc.; take notes for yourself in the margins; underline important passages; turn down pages to which you want to return. If you have questions or concerns about your class participation, please feel free to come by during office hours or to schedule an appointment to discuss those concerns.
3 Short Assignments (4pp. each)
Students will undertake three short assignments over the course of the semester: a close-reading, a Follow the Footnote research assignment, and a Research Puzzle assignment. Detailed assignments will be handed out and discussed well in advance of deadlines.

Sophomore Essay
The sophomore essay is a 3000-4000 word research essay. In working toward this final essay, students will submit a 1-page proposal with a working bibliography, as well as a short draft of 5 pages. Students will also participate in a peer draft workshop with their short draft during the last week of class.

Oral Examination
Each student will take a 30-minute oral examination at the end of the semester on a topic of his or her design.

Grading Percentages
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>3 Short Assignments (10% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore Essay Proposal &amp; Draft (5% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore Essay</td>
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<td>Oral Examination</td>
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COURSE POLICIES

Extensions and Late Assignments
Students are expected to submit all work by the stated deadlines. Extensions will be allowed only in extreme circumstances (i.e., a medical emergency). Late assignments will be marked down one level for each 24-hour period they are late (e.g., an A- becomes a B+, a C+ becomes a C, etc.).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in the instructor's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty may contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

Academic Integrity and Policy on Collaboration
Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s ideas or language as your own, whether intentionally or not. It is in most cases a serious violation of ethics and policy, punishable by grading penalties and referral to the Administrative Board of the College for disciplinary action. Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work
you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your
own approach to the topic. Indeed, you should always take great care to distinguish your own
ideas and knowledge from information derived from other sources. Be aware that the term
“sources” includes not only primary and secondary material published in print or online, but also
information and opinions gained directly from other people. Quotations must be placed properly
within quotation marks and must be cited fully. In addition, all paraphrased material must be
acknowledged completely. You are responsible for learning the proper forms of citation. I expect
you to be familiar with the *Harvard Guide to Using Sources*, which is available at
http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu, and to adhere to either MLA or Chicago citation form. More
information on the College’s policies on academic integrity can be found in the *Harvard College
Handbook for Students*.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Elizabeth Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance* (UNC Press,
  978-0807064191
  978-0393928617
- Tony Horwitz, *Midnight Rising: John Brown and the Raid that Sparked the Civil War* (Picador,
  0812246247
  (Broadview, 2007), ISBN 978-1551113463

***Please purchase the editions specified. All books are available used (and often at a substantial
discount) on Amazon and elsewhere.

**SCHEDULE OF READING & WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**


**Primary:**
- Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle” (1819)
- Declaration of Independence (1776)

**Secondary:**
- Al Young, “George Robert Twelves Hewes: A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the
UNIT 1—THINKING THE UNTHINKABLE: THE ORIGINS OF REVOLUTION

Week 2, February 2-6. Haiti: Undertaking a Revolution for Universal Citizenship
Primary:  
Leonora Sansay, *The Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo* (1808)
Secondary:  

Primary:  
Martin Delany, *Blake or the Huts of America* (1862)
Secondary:  

Additional events with and readings by Kate Masur:
Readings TBD
Thursday, February 12: Public Lecture with Kate Masur
Friday, February 13: Seminar for Concentrators with Kate Masur

Week 4, February 16-20. Shawnee Prophets: Calling for a United Native America
Primary:  
Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Moravian Indian mission on White River; diaries and letters, May 5, 1799, to November 12, 1806, 21 August 1805 - 30 August 1805 (308-313); 9 February 1805 - 20 February 1805 (332-341); 12 May 1805 - 23 May 1805 (353-357); 16 Feb 1806 - 17 April 1806 (401-407)*
Secondary:  

DUE: Short Assignment #1—Close-Reading

Primary:  
The *Confessions of Nat Turner* (1831)
Secondary:  

*Nat Turner: A Slave Rebellion in History and Memory* (2004), selected essays

**UNIT 2—REVOLUTIONS AGAINST THE SOCIAL ORDER**

**Week 6, March 2-6. Utopia: Experimenting with a New America**  
Primary:  
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance* (1852)  
Additional primary documents from the Norton Critical Edition:  
- George Ripley, Letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson, November 9, 1840, pp. 174-77  
- Nathaniel Hawthorne at Brook Farm, pp. 190-216  
Secondary:  
DUE: Short Assignment #2—Follow the Footnote

Primary:  
“Benjamin Hawkins and the Creek Indians” uncredited image (1805):  
http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Multimedia.jsp?id=m-2489  
David Crockett, *Narrative of the Life of David Crockett* (1834), pages 72-101  
Secondary:  

**Week 8, March 16-20. SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9, March 23-27. Race and Property: Rioting in Philadelphia**  
Primary:  
Edward Clay, *Practical Amalgamation* lithographs (1839)  
Edgar Allan Poe, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841)  
George Lippard, *The Killers: A Narrative of Real Life in Philadelphia* (1849)  
Secondary:  

DUE: Final Project Research Proposal

**UNIT 3—DISOBEDIENCE AND RESISTANCE:**
**MEASURING DEGREES OF REVOLUTION**

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**Week 10, March 30-April 3. Enslaved Women: Creating Spaces of Resistance**

**Primary:**
Mattie J. Jackson, *The Story of Mattie J. Jackson* (1866)
Herman Melville, “Benito Cereno” (1855)

**Secondary:**

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**Week 11, April 6-10. William Apess: Reclaiming Native American Land**

**Primary:**

**Secondary:**

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**Week 12, April 13-17. Anthony Burns: Disobeying the Fugitive Slave Act in Boston**

**Primary:**
The Fugitive Slave Act (1850)
Henry David Thoreau, “Slavery in Massachusetts” (1854)
Whitman, “A Boston Ballad” (1854)

**Secondary:**

DUE: Short Assignment #3—Research Puzzle

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**Week 13, April 20-24. Final Projects**

Final project peer workshops

DUE: 5-page short draft
Final Project due date TBD