

Warfare in Early America: 1585–1840

Professor Timothy J. Shannon

Fall 2023

Course Description

One of the most enduring symbols of early American history is the colonial militiaman, who supposedly used his experience fighting Indians to defeat British redcoats and win independence. Historians have challenged that popular image by presenting a much more complex narrative about the clash between Native and colonial peoples in early America. In this course, we will explore the evolution of warfare in North America from the earliest contacts between Native Americans and Europeans through the early nineteenth century. Our focus will be on the cultural values and gender roles that shaped armed violence in various forms, including Indian wars, slave rebellions, and international conflicts. We will trace the development of an American way of war that influenced the formation of national identity and left important legacies for modern Americans.

Course Readings

1. Bickham, Troy. *The Weight of Vengeance: The United States, the British Empire, and the War of 1812*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
2. Lambert, Frank. *The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World*. New York: Hill & Wang, 2007.
3. Little, Ann M. *Abraham in Arms: War and Gender in Colonial New England*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
4. Steele, Ian K. *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the "Massacre."* New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
5. Van Buskirk, Judith L. *Standing in their Own Light: African-American Patriots in the American Revolution*. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, 2017.

Course Requirements

- Contribute to nine discussion boards
- Complete five short papers (1–2 pages)
- Participate in at least three Q&As

- Complete a 15-page paper or project of appropriate rigor

Learning Objectives

1. Examine Native American motives and methods of warfare and the gender dynamics of intercultural conflict.
2. Investigate irregular warfare in colonial America, particularly as exhibited in Indian wars and slave rebellions.
3. Analyze how professional European armies transformed the nature of American warfare during the imperial wars of the eighteenth century.
4. Trace the evolution of the American Revolution from a colonial rebellion into an international conflict.
5. Learn how continuing armed conflict with enemies foreign and domestic shaped federal power and national identity in the nineteenth century.

Class Schedule

Week One: September 21: The Native American Way of War

Readings

- Little, *Abraham in Arms*, Introduction, Chapters 1–3.
- Daniel K. Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 40 (1983): 528–559. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Samuel de Champlain describes Indian Warfare (1609). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week One module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board One
 - First post due: Sunday, September 24
 - Second post due: Wednesday, September 27
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Week Two: September 28: The Clash of Military Cultures in Seventeenth-Century New England

Readings

- Little, *Abraham in Arms*, Chapters 4–5, Epilogue.

- Andrew Lipman, "'A Meanes to Knitt Them Together': The Exchange of Body Parts in the Pequot War," *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 65 (January 2008): 3–28. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Cotton Mather, "A Narrative of Hannah Dustan's Notable Deliverance from Captivity" (1697). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Two module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Two
 - First post due: Sunday, October 1
 - Second post due: Wednesday, October 4
- Short Paper One due: Wednesday, October 4
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor, or to one of your own design.

Q&A Session One: Tuesday, October 3 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET

Week Three: October 5: Indians, Slaves, and Servants in the Southern Colonies

Readings

- John K. Thornton, "African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion," *American Historical Review* 96 (October 1991): 1101–1112. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Two Accounts of the Stono Rebellion (1739). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Three module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Three
 - First post due: Sunday, October 8
 - Second post due: Wednesday, October 11
 - Final Paper/Project Question due: Wednesday, October 11
 - In roughly 1–2 pages, outline the question your final paper or project will attempt to answer. This should include a description of the paper or project you are proposing, some background information and historical context on your topic, a brief description of your research plan, and a justification for why your particular paper or project is worth pursuing.
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Week Four: October 12: Imperial Conflicts before 1750

Readings

- Steele, *Betrayals*, Chapters 1–3.
- Jane Landers, "Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mosé: A Free Black Town in Spanish Florida," *American Historical Review* 95 (1990): 9–30. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- John Williams, *The Redeemed Captive Returning to Zion* (1707). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Four module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Four
 - First post due: Sunday, October 15
 - Second post due: Wednesday, October 18
 - Short Paper Two due: Wednesday, October 18
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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Week Five: October 19: The Seven Years' War: Colonial Soldiers and European Armies

Readings

- Steele, *Betrayals*, chapters 4–7.
- Fred Anderson, "Why Did Colonial New Englanders Make Bad Soldiers? Contractual Principles and Military Conduct during the Seven Years' War," *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 38 (1981): 395–417. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- The Journals of Charlotte Brown (1755–56) and David Perry (1758). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Five module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Five
 - First post due: Sunday, October 22
 - Second post due: Wednesday, October 25
- Revised Question and Proposed Bibliography due: Wednesday, October 25

1. Revise your initial proposal to incorporate your section professor's feedback AND
2. Create an annotated bibliography containing at least five sources. Each of these sources should be followed by a short paragraph describing the source and what it will contribute to your final paper/project.

Q&A Session Two: Tuesday, October 24 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET

Week Six: October 26: The Seven Years' War: Native American Alliance and Resistance

Readings

- Complete Steele, *Betrayals*
- Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst," *Journal of American History* 86 (March 2000): 1552–1580. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- The Conestoga Indian Massacre and the Paxton Boys (1763–64). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Six module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Six
 - First post due: Sunday, October 29
 - Second post due: Wednesday, November 1
 - Short Paper Three due: Wednesday, November 1
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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Week Seven: November 2: The American Revolution as a Colonial Rebellion

Readings

- Van Buskirk, *Standing in Their Own Light*, Introduction, Chapters 1–3.
- John Shy, "Hearts and Minds in the American Revolution: The Case of 'Long Bill' Scott and Peterborough, New Hampshire," in Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence*, rev. ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 163–179. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Joseph Plumb Martin's *Narrative of . . . a Revolutionary Soldier* (1830). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Seven module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Seven
 - First post due: Sunday, November 5
 - Second post due: Wednesday, November 8
 - Short Paper Four due: Wednesday, November 8
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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Week Eight: November 9: The American Revolution as an Atlantic War

Readings

- Van Buskirk, *Standing in Their Own Light*, Chapters 4–6, Conclusion.
- Friederike Baer, "The Decision to Hire German Troops in the War of American Independence: Reactions in Britain and North America, 1774–1776," *Early American Studies* 13.1 (Winter 2015): 111–50. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- A Hessian Soldier's Description of the Siege and Surrender at Yorktown (1781). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Eight module.)

Assignments

- Paper/Project Preview due Wednesday, November 15
 - Paper: Turn in a rough draft of the first five pages of your final paper
 - Project: Submissions of the project preview will differ from project to project according to type. Determine an appropriate portion of your final project to turn in with your section professor.

Q&A Session Three: Tuesday, November 14 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET

Week Nine: November 16: Frontier Warfare in the New Nation

Readings

- Book: Lambert, *The Barbary Wars*, Introduction, Chapters 1–3.
- Gregory Evans Dowd, "Indigenous Peoples without the Republic," *Journal of American History* 104 (June 2017): 19–41. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))

- A Delaware Prophet's Vision for Renewing Indian Power (1763). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Nine module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Eight
 - First post due: Sunday, November 19
 - Second post due: Wednesday, November 22
 - Short Paper Five due Wednesday, November 22
 - Write a response paper: You can respond to the prompt created by your section professor or to one of your own design.
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Week 10: November 23: Creating a Federal Military

Readings

- Lambert, *The Barbary Wars*, Chapters 4–7.
- Don Higginbotham, "The Federalized Militia Debate: A Neglected Aspect of Second Amendment Scholarship," *William and Mary Quarterly*, third series, 55 (January 1998): 39–58. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- *History of the Captivity and Sufferings of Mrs. Maria Martin, Who Was Six Years a Slave in Algiers* (1806). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Ten module.)

Assignments

- Rough Draft due Wednesday, November 29
 - Paper: Turn in a rough draft of the first ten pages (at minimum) of your final paper.
 - Project: Submissions of the project rough draft will differ from project to project according to type. Determine an appropriate portion of your final project to turn in with your section professor.

Q&A Session Four: Tuesday, November 28 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET

Week Eleven: November 30: The War of 1812: Second War of Independence or First Civil War?

Readings

- Bickham, *The Weight of Vengeance*, Introduction, Chapters 1–3.
- Martha Elena Rojas, “‘Insults Unpunished’: Barbary Captives, American Slaves, and the Negotiation of Liberty,” *Early American Studies* 1.2 (Fall 2003): 159–186. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- *The Life and Adventures of Joshua Penny* (1815). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Eleven module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Nine
 - First post due: Sunday, December 3
 - Second post due: Wednesday, December 6

Q&A Session Five: Monday, December 4 - 8:00–9:30 p.m. ET

Week Twelve: December 7: Western Expansion and Indian Removal

Readings

- Bickham, *The Weight of Vengeance*, Chapters 4–6, 8, Conclusion.
- Theda Perdue, “The Legacy of Indian Removal,” *Journal of Southern History* 78 (February 2012): 3–36. ([This reading can be accessed through Musselman Library with your Gettysburg College credentials.](#))
- Native Perspectives on Removal: Black Hawk (1833) and William Apess (1837). (A link to this reading can be found in the Week Twelve module.)

Assignments

- Final Paper/Project due: Wednesday, December 13
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Course and Program Policies

It is the responsibility of students to know, understand, and abide by course and program policies.

For a full overview of program policies, review the Gettysburg College–Gilder Lehrman Institute Student Handbook.

Course correspondence

Correspondence with faculty and administrators should be formal. Include a subject line, addressee, and closing. Put the name and number of your course in the subject line.

Plagiarism and AI

This program uses Turnitin to check for instances of plagiarism and AI. Plagiarism and papers composed fully or in part by AI will not be tolerated. This includes self-plagiarism. A student caught plagiarizing or composing papers with AI for the first time may receive a zero on the assignment. A student caught plagiarizing or composing with AI for a second time may be permanently removed from the program.

Your section professor will set the policies for use of AI for research or purposes other than composing your papers.

Late work

Assignments should be submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. Pacific Time on the due date unless otherwise specified by your section professor. If you think you will be unable to submit an assignment on time, it is your responsibility to contact your section professor to ask for an extension before the assignment's due date. Late assignments will be docked 5% if less than a week late, 10% if one week late, and an additional 10% for each subsequent week.

Grading scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade	Grade Points
A	95%–100%	4
A-	90%–94%	3.67
B+	87%–89%	3.33
B	84%–86%	3
B-	80%–83%	2.67
C+	77%–79%	2.33
C	74%–76%	2
C-	70%–73%	1.67
D+	67%–69%	1.33
D	64%–66%	1
D-	60%–63%	.67

F	0%–59%	0
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Assignment Descriptions

Short Papers (25% of grade – 5% per short paper)

Students will complete five short papers. Each should be approximately 500 words long. The purpose of these papers is not to merely summarize weekly readings but to demonstrate that you have read them analytically and contextually. Students have the option of responding to a prompt created by their section professor or to one of their own design. Prompts should reflect the themes discussed in course readings. If you need help getting started, you can complete one of the options listed below.

Complete a thesis identification - Select one of your assigned readings and focus on identifying the thesis as well as the evidence the authors use to support that thesis.

Complete a primary source evaluation - Evaluate a primary source from the Gilder Lehrman Collection or elsewhere. Primary sources must be relevant to that week's readings. Keep the following questions in mind:

- Who is the author of this document?
- Who was their intended audience?
- How might both author and audience impact the content of the document?
- For what reason was this document created?

Complete a book review - Focus on one of the secondary sources assigned in this course and critique it. Keep the following questions in mind:

- What is the author's argument?
- Does the author adequately support their argument?
- Are you convinced of their argument? If not, why not?
- How does this source fit into the larger discussion of its topic?

Discussion Board Posts (18% of grade – 2% per discussion board)

Students will interact in nine discussion boards in this course. Discussion boards are led by section professors, who will provide specific instructions for participation in their section. You are required to make at least one post to each discussion board and respond to **at least two other students**.

Question-and-Answer Sessions (15% of grade – 5% per reaction)

Throughout the semester the lead professor of each course will conduct five Q&As. Students **MUST** attend at least three of these sessions for each course they are taking. **In order to receive credit for attending each Q&A, you must complete a 1–2-paragraph Q&A**

Reaction within 24 hours of participation. Note: If you cannot attend three of the five Q&As, you may receive credit by viewing archived Q&As and completing a 500-word review of topics covered for each missed Q&A. **Makeup assignments must be completed within two weeks of the missed Q&A.**

Final Project/Paper (42% of grade)

For the final assignment of each course, you will choose to complete either a research project or 15-page research paper. Research projects are a public-education tool designed for the general population, teachers, and/or students of varying ages. Sample projects include (but are not limited to) vodcasts and podcasts, documentary editing and transcription, websites, annotated readers, walking tours, or museum exhibits. Lesson plans *will not* be accepted. A 5-page paper narrative must accompany the project. Your section professor must approve research projects.

The research paper can be a traditional position paper that uses original research to prove a thesis statement or a historiography paper that critically examines how American historians have interpreted the same event differently and why shifts in historical debates may have occurred.

Both final assignment options require you to ask an open-ended historical question (something that does not have an easy yes or no answer) that you do not yet know the answer to. You will then use the research process (pulling from a variety of resources, mostly primary source documents) to explore that question and create a thesis-driven answer. Regardless of whether you choose to pursue a project or paper, finals are scaffolded throughout the semester. This method breaks up a large grade into smaller constituent grades and allows time to incorporate instructor feedback into assignments.

Scaffolded Assignments

- Final Project/Paper Proposal (2%)

In roughly 1–2 pages, you should outline the main question, topic, or purpose of your final project or paper. This should include a description of the project or paper you are proposing, some background information and historical context on your topic (answer the questions who, what, where, and when), a brief description of your research plan (this does not need to be super specific, but should outline how many weeks you plan to research, if you need to schedule research trips or if your sources are published or available digitally, and when you plan to begin writing) and a justification for why your particular project or paper is worth pursuing (what is the significance of this topic? What does it add to our historical knowledge? Are you filling a gap that other historians have overlooked such as considering race, ethnicity, or gender?)

- Revised Proposal and Annotated Bibliography (3.5%)

This assignment will give you the opportunity to incorporate the feedback you received on the first draft of your proposal. In addition to incorporating your section professor's comments, you will also submit a proposed bibliography listing five sources you plan on utilizing in your research for your final product. Each of these sources should be followed by a brief summary (3–5 sentences) of the source and what it will contribute to your research process.

- Project or Paper Preview (5%)

This will give you the opportunity to show the progress you have made on your final project or paper and get some early-stage feedback from your section professor. For a final project, determine with your section professor an appropriate portion of your final submission to turn in. For a final paper, this should be roughly the first five pages of what will ultimately be your final submission.

- Rough Draft (10.5%):

For a final project, determine with your section professor an appropriate portion of your final submission to turn in. For a final paper, this should be, at minimum, the first ten pages of what will ultimately be your final submission.

- Final Product (21%):

Final Project: Much like the final paper option, a final project is meant to prove that you have mastered the content covered by this course. We encourage you to be creative in your approach to this project, though it should be equivalent in rigor and workload to a final paper.

Final Paper: Final papers should be at least fifteen pages in length. These can take the form of research papers or historiography papers.