

**A More Perfect Union:
The Origins and Development of the U.S. Constitution
Seminar on Teaching American History
Cape Cod Collaborative Consortium
June 23-June 26, June 30-July 3, 2008**

Draft Syllabus for Summer Session

Please note that the syllabus, while essentially outlined below, may be subject to some shifts to accommodate educational opportunities that may arise during the two-week seminar.

Week One

Preparation for Monday, June 23:

In Book of Readings: R. B. Bernstein, "The American Revolution as a Constitutional Crisis"; review "Prologue."

In Kurland's *The Founders' Constitution*, The Declaration of Independence, pp. 9-11.

In Book of Readings: R. B. Bernstein, "The Revolution and State Constitution-Making."

In Kurland, "Thoughts on Government," pp. 107-110; Virginia Declaration of Rights, pp. 6-7; The Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, pp. 11-23.

In Book of Readings: Gordon Wood Interview from Book of Readings.

Review chapter titled "Republicanism" in Gordon Wood's *American Revolution*.

Monday, June 23

Speaker: R. B. Bernstein

Title: The Anchoring of American Law

8:30-9:00 Continental Breakfast

9:00-10:30 Part One: Becoming Independent

The first part will examine how a family quarrel within the British Empire spiraled out of control until it led to the first successful colonial revolution against a mother country. It will stress, among other things, the need to understand that the American Revolution had its roots in Anglo-American constitutional history, with colonists and mother country's polemicists disputing the meaning of the unwritten British constitution as applied to America.

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 Part Two: An Age of Experiments in Government

The second part will focus on the Americans' efforts to restore legitimate government in a form that recognized their rejection of monarchism. It will consider the development of written constitutions

and declarations of rights, the constitutional convention and the proper means of exercising the constituent power, and the quandary of relations between church and state.

12:30-1:30 Lunch

1:30-3:00 Breakout Session: “Gordon Wood’s Revolution”

3:00-4:00 Discussion

Preparation for Tuesday, June 24

In Book of Readings: R. B. Bernstein, "Confederation and Constitution"; "Exploding Cigar"; "Federalist Papers as Road Map."

In Kurland, *The Articles of Confederation [1777-1781]*, pp. 23-26.

The Treaty of Paris of 1783

Northwest Ordinance

Report of the Annapolis Convention of 1786

Resolution of the Confederation Congress, 21 February 1787

James Madison, Vices of the Political System of the United States

In Michael Kammen's *The Origins of the American Constitution: A Documentary History*.

Review Chapter titled "Selected Letters," pp. 53-122.

In Douglass Adair's *Fame and the Founding Fathers*, Review: "Experience Must Be Our Guide", pp. 152-175; "James Madison," pp. 176-199; "Fame and the Founding Fathers," pp. 3-36.

Federalist Papers, 1 and 37; then 10, 14, 51; then 15, 69, 70, 78.

Tuesday, June 25

Speakers: R.B. Bernstein, Peter Gibbon

Title: The Anchoring of American Law

8:30-9:00 Continental Breakfast

9:00-10:30 Part Three: The Making of the Constitution

This part will examine the Americans' hesitant experiments with government for the thirteen United States. First, it will consider the ramshackle Articles of Confederation, assessing the Confederation's achievements as well as its drawbacks. Second, it will explore how Americans who thought in national terms began to recognize the Confederation's weaknesses and to begin to design solutions for them. Third, it will sketch the origins of the Federal Convention of 1787 and conclude by viewing the Convention as an epitome of the American Enlightenment.

10:30-11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:30 Part Three Continued

12:30-1:30	Lunch
1:30-2:45	Breakout Session: “Douglas Adair’s Vision”
2:45-3:00	Break
3:00-4:00	Discussion

Preparation for Wednesday, June 25.

In Pauline Maier’s, *American Scripture*, Chapters 1 and 2, appendices B and C. From the Book of Readings: Merrill Jensen and John P. Kaminski et. al., eds., Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution, Vol. I (Madison, 1976). 304-18 (the three documents issued by the Philadelphia convention, including the Constitution); Vol. 5 (Madison, 1998), pages 888-92, 896-98 (Acton and Carlisle through Ashfield), 904 (Bernardston and Leyden), 949-50 (Dalton), 953-55 (Fitchburgh through Gardner), 697-69 (Harvard), 995-998 (Northampton and Easthampton), 1002-03 (Paxton), 1013-14 (Richmond), 1017-23 (Sandwich), 1046-48 (Sunderland), 1055-58 (Townshend and Truro), and the map of the state with indicators of how town delegates voted that's on the volume's opening and endpapers; and Vol. VI (Madison, 2000), 1476-78 (the Massachusetts' ratification resolution).

Wednesday, June 25

Speaker: Pauline Maier

8:30-9:00	Continental Breakfast
9:00-10:30	“The People As Sovereign: Independence and the Ratification of the Constitution”
10:30-11:00	Coffee Break
11:00-12:30	<p>Discussion of issues based on assigned reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why did “the people,” insofar as the documents in Appendix B of American Scripture reflect their views, support independence?</i> • <i>Were their reasons different than those in Congress's Declaration?</i> • <i>Why did Congress make the changes it made in the committee draft of the Declaration (see Appendix C)?</i> • <i>With regard to the ratification of the Constitution in Massachusetts, what objections did the towns make to the proposed Constitution?</i> • <i>Why did some persons---who favored ratification---not want the towns to instruct their delegates (see Northampton)?</i> • <i>What was the flap in Sandwich about?</i> • <i>What did that controversy---and the way the towns acted---have to do with the idea that “We the People” were supposed to ordain and establish the Constitution?</i> • <i>Did Massachusetts' form of ratification sufficiently address the objections raised by some towns?</i>

- 12:30—1:30** **Lunch**
- 1:30-2:30** **Documentary, *Liberty: The Making of the Constitution***
- 2:30-4:00** **Breakout Discussion of Documentary with Pauline Maier**

Preparation for Thursday, June 26

From Book of Readings: Lutz, “The Mayflower Compact.”

Thursday, June 26

Trip to Plimoth Plantation

Theme: The Mayflower Compact as a Preface to the Constitution

Meet at Plimoth Plantation. No breakfast provided. Lunch included.

Week Two

Monday, June 30th

Speaker: Carol Berkin

Title: Part I: Confederation and Constitution

Preparation for Monday, June 3

Review *A Brilliant Solution* (participants read book in advance of the seminar).

- 9:00-10:30** **Problems of the Confederation**
- 10:30-11:00** **Coffee Break**
- 11:00-12:30** **Constitutional Conventions: Key Issues, Personalities of Delegates**
- 12:30-1:30** **Lunch**
- 1:30-1:45** **Projects: Gary Hylander**
- 1:45-2:45** **Breakout Sessions on Projects**
- 3:00-4:00** **Documentary on Alexander Hamilton, Part I**

Preparation for Tuesday, July 1.

In Carol Berkin’s *Revolutionary Mothers*, Chapters One and Ten.

Tuesday, July 1**Speaker: Carol Berkin****Title: Part Two: Constitution and Confederation**

- 8:30-9:00** **Continental Breakfast**
- 9:00-10:30** **Who Was Left Out: Voting Requirements, Racial Discrimination**
- 10:30-11:00** **Coffee break**
- 11:00-12:30** **New Roles for Women, Women’s Contributions to the Revolution**
- 12:30-1:30** **Lunch**
- 1:30-2:45** **Primary Sources Exercise**
- 2:45-3:00** **Break**
- 3:00-4:00** **Discussion**

Preparation for Wednesday, July 2

Reviw pp. 3-131 of Darren Staloff’s *Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding*. Read “First Report on the Public Credit”; Federalist Papers, nos. 12, 13, 30, 31.

Wednesday, July 2**Speaker: Darren Staloff****Title: Hamilton and the New Nation**

- 9:00-10:30** **Hamilton’s Reports**
- 10:30-11:00** **Coffee Break**
- 11:00-12:30** **Hamilton and Politics**
- 12:30-1:30** **Lunch**
- 1:30-2:45** **Alexander Hamilton Documentary, Part II**
- 2:45-3:00** **Break**
- 3:00-4:00** **Breakout discussion of Documentary**

Preparation for Thursday, July 3

Bernard Bailyn, “John Adams” in Book of Readings

Thursday, July 3**Field Trip to Adams National Historic Park.**

Meet at Cape Codder for bus to Quincy. No breakfast. Lunch provided

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