

# Revolutionary America

HIST 4083 • Fall 2025

**PROFESSOR:** Dr. Mary Draper  
**E-MAIL:** mary.draper@msutexas.edu  
**OFFICE:** O'Donohoe 220  
**OFFICE HOURS:** MW – 1:00pm to 3:00pm  
F – 12:00pm to 1:00pm

## COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

How did American colonists go from being proud British subjects to revolutionaries in a mere decade? How did their experience as subjects shape their visions as citizens? This course considers the causes, course, character, and consequences of the American Revolution—an event that ushered in vast political, social, and economic transformations for some members of American society while entrenching inequality for others. It will trace developments within the American colonies and, later, the new United States from the 1760s through the early 1800s. In doing so, we will try to make sense of what the American Revolution meant to diverse peoples in the eighteenth century.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Analyze the cause, course, and consequences of the American Revolution;
- Consider how events shaped the lives of various populations across the new United States and vice versa;
- Interpret a wide range of sources (both secondary and primary) that creatively engage with archive of early American history;
- Be able to critique methodologies of historians;
- Write thoughtful, well-supported papers on the era of the American Revolution;
- Relay ideas about the era to public audiences through museum exhibits.

## READINGS:

Over the course of the semester, you will read three books in addition to other shorter readings (PDFs available on D2L). The books are as follows:

- Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (Random House, 2016) (~\$11.20 on [Amazon](#))
- Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (37 Ink, 2017) (~\$12.89 on [Amazon](#))
- Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* (Yale, 2001) (~\$21.54 on [Amazon](#)) Also available as an [e-book via Moffett Library](#)

## ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING:

Your grade for this course is based on the following percentages:

**Attendance and Participation:** 10%

**Reading Responses:**

Book Responses (5):	25%
Primary Source Analyses (5)	10%

**Exams:**

Exam 1:	15%
Exam 2:	15%

**Museum Project:**

Design & Brainstorming	5%
Primary Source(s) Analysis:	15%
Exhibit Copy:	5%

**Grading Scale:** A = 100-90; B = 89-80; C = 79-70; D = 69-60, F = 59 and below

**Attendance and Participation (10%):**

- **Attendance and Participation (10%):** Many of our classes will be discussion-based. To succeed in this class, you need to prepare for and participate in-class discussion. Come ready to talk about the readings. If you have perfect attendance but never speak, your discussion grade cannot be higher than a C. Likewise, if you do not attend class, your discussion grade will suffer. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of class. You will be given three unexcused absences. This grade will drop one letter grade with subsequent absences.

**Reading Responses (35%):**

- **Book Responses (25%):** You will complete five book responses. These are 1-2 page, double-spaced responses to chapters in the assigned books. You will be given seven opportunities (two per book) to write five responses.
- **Primary Source Analyses (10%):** You will complete five primary source analyses. There are 1-page double-spaced responses to assigned primary sources. You will have twelve opportunities to complete five of these responses.

**Exams (30%):**

- **Exam 1 & 2 (15% each):** You will take two take-home exams during this course. More information will be distributed at a later date.

**Museum Project (20%):**

- **Brainstorming & Design (5%):** You will brainstorm a design/layout for the museum exhibit. More information will be forthcoming.
- **Primary source(s) analysis (15%):** You will write a 3-4 page analysis of a primary source (or sources) found in Moffett Library's Special Collections. This analysis will be the basis for a Museum Exhibit.
- **Exhibit Copy (5%):** You will produce copy for an exhibit based on the above paper. More information on this will be forthcoming.

**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT & GENERATIVE AI:** *“As an MSU Student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so.”* Academic misconduct—cheating, collusion, plagiarism, etc.—will not be tolerated and will receive an F. For example, “cutting and pasting” from any internet source or poorly paraphrasing (i.e. changing a few words with the synonym function) without citing that source is plagiarism. Moreover, generating text via AI and citing it as your own is academic misconduct, and the instructor reserves the right to give that assignment an F.

*When can I use Generative AI like ChatGPT in this course?*

- The use of Generative AI **is allowed** in this course for the following: brainstorming your ideas and checking grammar.

*When must I avoid Generative AI like ChatGPT in this course?*

- The use of generative AI **is not permitted** for the following: Writing a draft of an assignment; and writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete assignments.

*Why can't I use Generative AI to write my papers?*

- Learning happens as we read, think, organize, summarize, respond, and engage. We don't want machines to do that for us.

**DROP DATE:** Last Day to drop with a grade of “W” is November 24. You will have the majority of your grade by that point, so you will be able to assess your standing in the class. It is the student's responsibility to visit with their academic advisor prior to withdrawing from a class.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. Students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

**COMPUTER REQUIREMENTS:** This class uses D2L. You will find readings, take reading quizzes, and submit papers through D2L. It is your responsibility to have access to a working computer in this class. Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings.

#### **TUTORING & ACADEMIC SUPPORT:**

TASP offers tutoring assistance. Please contact the TASP, (940) 397-4684, or visit the [TASP homepage](#) for more information.

**E-MAIL RESPONSES:** I will make every attempt to respond to e-mails sent during the week within one business day. That said, on weekends and evenings, please be patient if I do not respond immediately. If you e-mail me over the weekend, I might not respond until Monday.

**NOTICE:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Look on D2L for any relevant announcements.

*E-mail me (mary.draper@msutexas.edu) or visit me during office hours if you have any questions.*

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	Revolutionary America
<b>WEEK 1</b>  Aug. 25 Aug. 27 Aug. 29	<b>Monday: Introduction to Revolutionary America</b> <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Syllabus &amp; Schedule</li></ul> <i>In-Class Activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions</li><li>• Review Syllabus and Schedule</li></ul> <i>Due in class:</i> N/A  <b>Wednesday: Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story: Historiography &amp; Sources</b> <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Michael Hattem, <a href="#">The Historiography of the American Revolution: A Timeline</a></li><li>• “A War of Words” from Eric Hinderaker’s <i>Boston’s Massacre</i> (pp. 9-27) (PDF on D2L)</li></ul> <i>In-Class Activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion of Hinderaker</li><li>• <i>Questions to think about:</i> How did accounts of the Boston Massacre vary? What did these accounts agree on? What did they disagree on?</li></ul> <i>Due in class:</i> N/A  <b>Friday: Understanding Colonists’ World</b> <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Musings on Independence in the mid-1700s (PDF on D2L)</li></ul> <i>In-Class Activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trip to Special Collections to work with 17<sup>th</sup> Century Newspapers</li></ul> <i>Due in class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 1 of 12)</li></ul> <b>***Begin Reading***</b> Kathleen Duval’s <i>Independence Lost</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 1-129 due September 12</li> </ul>
	<b>The Road to Revolution</b>
<b>WEEK 2</b>	<p><b>Monday: No class</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: 1763</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “America and Americans in 1763” from Colin Calloway, <i>The Scratch of Pen</i> (19-46) (PDF on D2L)</li> <li>• Reactions to British Victories during the Seven Years’ War (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <i>In-Class Activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Calloway and primary sources</li> </ul> <i>Due in class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 2 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday: The 1760s</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul> <i>In-Class Activities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul> <i>Due in class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul> <p><b>***Continue Reading***</b>  Kathleen Duval’s <i>Independence Lost</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 1-129 due September 12 (next Friday!)</li> </ul> </p> </p></p>
	<b>Taxing the Colonists</b>
<b>WEEK 3</b>	<p><b>Monday: April 1764</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colonists Respond to the Sugar Act &amp; Currency Act (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <i>In-Class Activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <i>Due in class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 3 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Wednesday: 1765</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parliamentary Debate over Stamp Act (PDF on D2L)</li> <li>• Reactions to the Stamp Act (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> </p> </p>

	<p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 4 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday: <i>Independence Lost</i> (Part I)</b></p> <p><i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DuVal, <i>Independence Lost</i>, 1-129</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Duval</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Response (Opportunity 1 of 7)</li> </ul> <p><b>***Continue Reading***</b></p> <p>Kathleen Duval's <i>Independence Lost</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 130-218 due September 19 (next Friday!)</li> </ul>
	<b>Organizing Resistance</b>
<p><b>WEEK 4</b></p> <p>Sep. 15</p> <p>Sep. 17</p> <p>Sep. 19</p>	<p><b>Monday: The Crisis Deepens</b></p> <p><i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resistance to the Townshend Acts (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i> N/A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 5 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Wednesday: The Boston Massacre</b></p> <p><i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounts of the Boston Massacre (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i> N/A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 6 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday: <i>Independence Lost</i> (Part II)</b></p> <p><i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DuVal, <i>Independence Lost</i>, 130-218</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of DuVal</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Response (Opportunity 2 of 7)</li> </ul> <p><b>***Continue Reading***</b>  Kathleen Duval's <i>Independence Lost</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pages 219-351 due September 26 (next Friday!)</li> </ul>
	<b>Declaring Independence</b>
<b>WEEK 5</b>  Sep. 22 Sep. 24 Sep. 26	<p><b>Monday: From the Boston Tea Party to the Continental Congress</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boston Tea Party Newspaper Debate (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 7 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Wednesday: Declaring Independence</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Declaration of Independence (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 8 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday: <i>Independence Lost</i> (Part III)</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DuVal, <i>Independence Lost</i>, 219 - end</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of DuVal</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Response (Opportunity 3 of 7)</li> </ul>
	<b>“How does a ragtag volunteer army... somehow defeat a global superpower?”</b>
<b>WEEK 6</b>	<p><b>Monday: Choosing Sides: Loyalists vs. Patriots</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>

<p>Sep. 29 Oct. 1 Oct. 3</p>	<p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <p><i>Due in class:</i> N/A</p> <p><b>Wednesday: Raising an Army</b> <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Difficulties of Raising an Army (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i> N/A</p> <p><b>Friday: No Class</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on Exam #1 due Sunday at 11:59pm</li> </ul>
	<b>The Limits of Liberty</b>
<p><b>WEEK 7</b></p> <p>Oct. 6 Oct. 8 Oct. 10</p>	<p><b>Monday: Constitutions</b> <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Articles of Confederation (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul> <p><b>Wednesday: Loyalists &amp; Women</b> <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loyalists during and after the Revolutionary War (PDF on D2L)</li> <li>• Women in Revolutionary America (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i> N/A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 9 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday: Never Caught (Part I)</b> <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dunbar, <i>Never Caught</i>, 1-86</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Dunbar</li> <li>• Dunbar's sources</li> </ul>



	<p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Response (Opportunity 4 of 7)</li> </ul>
	<b>Limits of Liberty (Part II)</b>
<b>WEEK 8</b>  Oct. 13 Oct. 15 Oct. 17	<p><b>Monday: Demobilizing the Army and Veterans Politics</b></p> <p><i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing for Veterans in the new United States (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 10 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Wednesday: Shays's Rebellion and other crises...</b></p> <p><i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Limitations of the Articles of Confederation (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Primary Sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 11 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday: <i>Never Caught</i> (Part II)</b></p> <p><i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dunbar, <i>Never Caught</i>, 97-end</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of Dunbar</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Book Response (Opportunity 5 of 7)</li> </ul>
	<b>Creating the Constitution</b>
<b>WEEK 9</b>  Oct. 20 Oct. 22 Oct. 24	<p><b>Monday: The Constitutional Convention</b></p> <p><i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excerpts from the Constitutional Convention</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of the Constitutional Convention</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 12 of 12)</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Wednesday: Debating Slavery</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excerpts from the Constitutional Convention</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of the Constitutional Convention</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primary Source Analysis (Opportunity 12 of 12)</li> </ul> <p><b>Friday: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBA</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <p><i>Due in class:</i> N/A</p>
	<p><b>Washington's Presidency</b></p>
<p><b>WEEK 10</b></p> <p>Oct. 27 Oct. 29 Oct. 31</p>	<p><b>Monday: The First Mr. President</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freeman, <i>Affairs of Honor</i>, xiii-61</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of Freeman</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i> N/A</p> <p><b>Wednesday: How to be a politician in the early United States (Part I)</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freeman, <i>Affairs of Honor</i>, 61-104</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of Freeman</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i> N/A</p> <p><b>Friday: How to be a politician in the early United States (Part II)</b>  <i>Reading for class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freeman, <i>Affairs of Honor</i>, 105-158</li> </ul> <p><i>In-Class Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of Freeman</li> </ul> <p><i>Due in class:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book Response (Opportunity 6 of 7)</li> </ul>

	<b>Politics in the Early United States</b>
<b>WEEK 11</b>  Nov. 3 Nov. 5 Nov. 7	<b>Monday: Dueling</b> <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freeman, <i>Affairs of Honor</i>, 159-198</li> </ul> <i>In-Class Activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of Freeman</li> </ul> <i>Due in class:</i> N/A  <b>Wednesday: No Class Work on Exam #2</b>  <b>Friday: No Class Work on Exam #2</b>  Exam #2 due Sunday at 11:59pm
	<b>Jefferson's America</b>
<b>WEEK 12</b>  Nov. 10 Nov. 12 Nov. 14	<b>Monday: Jefferson's America</b> <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excerpts from Jefferson (PDF on D2L)</li> </ul> <i>In-Class Activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion</li> </ul> <i>Due in class:</i> N/A  <b>Wednesday: The Election of 1800</b> <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freeman, <i>Affairs of Honor</i>, 199-end</li> </ul> <i>In-Class Activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussion of Freeman</li> </ul> <i>Due in class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Book Response (Opportunity 7 of 7)</li> </ul> <b>Friday: Wichita Falls Museum of Art</b> <i>Reading for class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul> <i>In-Class Activities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tour of Wichita Falls Museum of Art</li> </ul> <i>Due in class:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>

<b>WEEK 13</b>  Nov. 17 Nov. 19 Nov. 21	<b>Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: In-class work on Museum Exhibit</b>  <b>No readings</b>
<b>WEEK 14</b>  Nov. 24 <del>Nov. 26</del> <del>Nov. 28</del>	<b>**Last day to drop classes with a “W” is November 24**</b>  <b>Monday: In-class work on Museum Exhibit</b>  <b>Wednesday: Happy Thanksgiving!</b>  <b>Friday: Happy Thanksgiving!</b>
<b>WEEK 15</b>  Dec. 1 Dec. 3 Dec. 5	<b>In-class work on Museum Exhibit</b>  <b>No readings</b>  <b>Excerpt of Primary Source Analysis due on December 1</b>  <b>Draft of Copy due on December 3</b>
<b>FINALS WEEK</b>	<b>Final Papers due</b>