

HISTORY 3122 (332)  
Fall 2021  
T 1:15-4:05, Adams 103

McMahon  
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### **Community in America, Maine, and at Bowdoin**

In this history “problems” course, we will explore the ideals and social, economic, political, and cultural realities of community in American history, and examine continuity, change, and socio-economic, racial, and ethnic diversity in community experience. We will begin by examining studies of communities in seventeenth-century Massachusetts and early national upstate New York. We will then sharpen our focus on Maine and on Bowdoin College and its midcoast neighborhood, working with readings in both the secondary literature and a wealth of primary sources.

*Course expectations and requirements:* The course will be held as a seminar, meeting once a week for two hours and 50 minutes. For the first 8 weeks of the semester, and weeks 12 and 13, our discussions will focus on various studies about community history. Students are encouraged to purchase the assigned books from the bookstore; a copy of each book is on reserve in the library. In addition, students are encouraged but not required to explore the further readings for each class meeting—primary sources (documents) and/or secondary sources (articles or chapters). Those reading assignments are available either on e-reserve or by a link to an online source or database from the *History 332 Reading Guide on Blackboard*. The *Reading Guide* also provides questions to help focus your reading. In preparation for each class meeting, students should read *and* begin to analyze the assigned texts; they should come to class with specific questions and some preliminary answers. By reading and participating in class discussions, students should develop an understanding of the research process and practice the analytical skills that they will use to pursue independent research in history. If a student misses a class meeting, the student is expected to write a 2-3 page analysis of the readings for that class. Class participation counts for 40% of the final grade.

Throughout the semester, students will engage in the process of designing and pursuing their own primary research projects. Early in the semester, each student will begin to formulate a thesis question and a preliminary hypothesis about some aspect of community history. During weeks 9-11, students will focus on their independent research projects by finding, reading, and analyzing primary and secondary sources for their research projects. In early November, students will submit a research paper prospectus which presents a preliminary thesis statement or hypothesis, a brief annotated bibliography of the primary and secondary sources that they will analyze, and a preliminary outline. A draft of a section of the paper will be due in late November. The research paper (22-25 pages) will be due on the scheduled final-exam date for the course. Research methodology and process, including the prospectus, draft, and work-in-progress presentation, count for 20%, and the essay counts for 40% of the final grade.

All students are expected to read, understand, and abide by the Bowdoin College Academic Honor Code and by the rules of citation described on the Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin Academic Honesty Site at <https://www.bowdoin.edu/dean-of-students/judicial-board/academic-honesty-and-plagiarism/index.html>.

*Course texts:*

Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (1974)

Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (1996)

Maureen Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor: African Americans in a Maine Community, 1880-1950* (2005)

Charles Calhoun, *A Small College in Maine: Two Hundred Years of Bowdoin* (1993)

All online resources are available through Blackboard and/or the History 3122 website:

<https://tildesites.bowdoin.edu/~smcmahon/courses/hist332/index.html>

1. 9/2 PREVIEW

Read and consider the questions listed on the Preview page of the History 3122 Reading Guide

2. 9/7 INTRODUCTION: Historical visions and sociological models of community

readings: Thomas Bender, Ch. 1, "Introduction: The Meanings of Community," Ch. 2, "Social Theory and the Problem of Community," 3-43, in Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (1978). (e-reserve)

David J. Russo, "Introduction," "The Little Community: Towns (and Rural Areas Too?)," in Russo, *Families and Communities: A New View of American History* (1974), 1-51. (e-reserve)

Darrett Rutman, "Assessing the Little Communities of Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d ser. XLIII (1986), 163-178. (JSTOR)

document: John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity" (1630), *Hanover Historical Texts Project* (LINK) or *The Winthrop Society* (LINK)

3. 9/14 NEW ENGLAND COMMUNITIES: Witchcraft as a community phenomenon

reading: Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (1974)

documents: Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, eds., *Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents*, 3 volumes (sample the transcripts)

or Bernard Rosenthal, et.al., eds., *Records of the Salem Witch-hunt* (2009) (sample the records)

4. 9/21 SALEM REPOSSESSED: Contrasting perspectives and analyses

reading: *Forum: Salem Repossessed*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series 65.3 (July 2008), 391-534. (JSTOR)

further reading (crafting a thesis and argument): Mary Beth Norton, "George Burroughs and the Girls from Casco: The Maine Roots of Salem Witchcraft," *Maine History* 40.4 (Winter 2001-2002), 259-277. (e-reserve)

*Guidelines for writing a research paper prospectus and introduction in history* (Blackboard or course homepage LINK)

5. 9/28 LIBRARY TOUR AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES: Barbara Levergood, Reference Librarian, and Marieke Van Der Steenhoven, Special Collections Education and Outreach Librarian.

*Note:* We will meet at Bookhenge in HL at 1:15)

optional readings: Lorena S. Walsh, "The Historian as Census Taker: Individual Reconstitution and the Reconstruction of Censuses for a Colonial Chesapeake County," *William and Mary Quarterly* 38.2 (1981), 242-260. (JSTOR)

Darrett Rutman, "New England as Idea and Society Revisited," *William and Mary Quarterly* 41.1 (1984), 56-61. (JSTOR)

Robert Dykstra and William Silag, "Doing Local History: Monographic Approaches to the Smaller Community," *American Quarterly* 37.3 (1985), 411-425. (JSTOR)

Ellen Somekawa and Elizabeth Smith, "Theorizing the Writing of History Or, 'I Can't Think Why It Should Be So Dull, For a Great Deal of It Must Be Invention'," *Journal of Social History* 22.1 (1988), 149-161. (Academic Search Complete)

T.J. Jackson Lears, "Power, Culture, and Memory," *Journal of American History* 75.1 (1988), 137-40. (JSTOR)

Ellen Fitzpatrick, "Caroline F. Ware and the Cultural Approach to History," *American Quarterly* 43.2 (1991), 173-198. (JSTOR)

Paulina MacDougall, "The Historian's Dilemma: Choosing, Weighing, and Interpreting Sources," *Maine History* 43.2 (2007), 171-186. (e-reserve)

6. 10/5 THE FRONTIER IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC: Community, biography, fiction, myth  
 reading: Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (1996)  
*Note:* read Introduction, Chapters 1-4, 8, 10, 13-15 (pp. 3-114, 199-228, 256-291, 346-427); skim chapters 5-7, 9, 11, 12
7. 10/12 FALL VACATION: No class meeting
- Wed.-Fri, Oct. 13-15 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES to discuss research projects and prospectuses
8. 10/19 AN AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MAINE: Uncovering communities within communities  
 reading: Maureen Elgersman Lee, *Black Bangor: African Americans in a Maine Community, 1880-1950* (2005)
- further reading: H.H. Price and Gerald E. Talbot, *Maine's Visible Black History: The First Chronicle of Its People* (2006)  
 Maureen Elgersman Lee, "What They Lack in Numbers': Locating Black Portland, 1870-1930," in Joseph A. Conforti, ed., *Creating Portland: History and Place in Northern New England* (2005), 218-246. (e-reserve)
9. 10/26 LIBRARY RESEARCH LAB, HL: Barbara Levergood
10. 11/2 LIBRARY RESEARCH: Library Research Lab, Special Collections
- Fri., Nov. 5 Research Paper Prospectus due
11. 11/9 LIBRARY RESEARCH: research options: HL, HL-SC, MMM, MHS, MSL, PHS
12. 11/16 BOWDOIN COLLEGE: The beginnings to the 1830s  
 reading: Charles Calhoun, *A Small College in Maine: Two Hundred Years of Bowdoin* (1993), Introduction, Chapters 1-4, xiii-119. (reserve) or at Internet Archive: <http://archive.org/details/smallcollegeinma00calh>  
*Document from Special Collections:* request and read one or more documents that pertain to the founding and early history of Bowdoin College.
13. 11/23 BOWDOIN COLLEGE: 1840-1920  
 reading: Charles Calhoun, *A Small College in Maine*, Chapters 5-7, 120-205.  
*Document from Special Collections:* request and read one or more documents that pertain to this nineteenth- and early twentieth-century era in the history of Bowdoin College.
- further reading, Calhoun, *A Small College*, Chapters 8-9, Coda, 206-264
14. 11/30 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES: discuss research and writing process
- Penultimate draft due:* Introduction and a section of the research essay
15. 12/7 FINAL CLASS MEETING: work-in-progress presentations
- Research Paper due:* Thurs. Dec. 16, 5:00 p.m.