

Master of American History and Government  
Ashland University

**AHG 604:  
The Early Republic**

Sunday, June 24 – Friday, June 29, 2007

Instructors: Rob McDonald and Steve Knott

**Course Focus:** This course covers the period from 1789 to 1817, from the ratification of the U.S. Constitution through the War of 1812 and the conclusion of the presidency of James Madison.

**Learning Objectives:** The course will address the democratization of America's politics, society, and economy, the origins of American foreign relations, and sectional antecedents of the U.S. Civil War.

**Requirements:** Students will be graded on the basis of a final exam worth 75% of the course grade and a brief paper worth 25% of the course grade. The paper may be submitted electronically one week after the conclusion of the class.

Students auditing the course as a part of a Teaching American History Grant program must complete the readings and fully participate in the seminars during the week.

**Required Texts**

- James Roger Sharp, *American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). ISBN: 0300065191.
- Joyce Appleby, *Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Times Books, 2003). ISBN: 0805069240.
- Garry Wills, *James Madison* (New York: Times Books, 2002). ISBN: 0805069054.
- Course Packet (CP) of readings

## **Sunday, June 24**

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**4:30 – 6:00 pm: Introduction & Session 1:** Introduction to this Seminar with Rob McDonald and Steve Knott

**Topic:** George Washington and the New Nation

**Focus:** Why was Washington considered the republican ideal? What were the new government's challenges? What were Americans' expectations?

**Reading:**

Sharp, 1-30

George Washington, First Inaugural Address, April 30, 1789 (CP pg. 1)

Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, May 5, 1789 (CP pg. 5)

George Washington, Farewell Address, October 19, 1796 (CP pg. 7)

**7:00 – 8:30 pm Institute Lecture**

## **Monday, June 25**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 3**

**Topic:** The Rise of Faction

**Focus:** How did Americans begin to divide into Federalist and Republican camps?

**Reading:**

Sharp, 31-68

Thomas Jefferson, Opinion on the Constitutionality of a National Bank, February 15, 1791 (CP pg. 17)

**10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 4**

**Topic:** The French Revolution in America

**Focus:** How did the revolution in France affect American politics? How did it expose different perceptions of the American Revolution?

**Reading:**

Sharp, 69-112

George Washington, The Proclamation of Neutrality, April 22, 1793 (CP pg. 21)

Alexander Hamilton and James Madison, The Pacificus-Helvidius Debate (CP pg. 23)

Thomas Jefferson, Opinion on the French Treaties, April 28, 1793 (CP pg. 29)  
John Adams, Letter to Thomas Jefferson, July 13, 1813 (CP pg. 37)

**4:30 - 6:00 pm: Session 5**

**Topic:** The Jay Treaty

**Focus:** How did foreign policy choices and challenges divide Americans?

**Reading:**

Sharp, 113-137

**Tuesday, June 26**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 6**

**Topic:** The Election of 1796

**Focus:** How would Americans define their principles when Washington was no longer around to embody them?

**Reading:**

Sharp, 138-162

John Adams, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1797 (CP pg. 39)

**10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 7**

**Topic:** Quasi War and Constitutional Crisis

**Focus:** Why didn't Adams declare war on France? Why did he sign the Alien and Sedition Acts? What was the significance of the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions?

**Reading:**

Sharp, 163-207

The Alien and Sedition Acts, 1798 (CP pg. 43)

Thomas Jefferson, Draft of the Kentucky Resolutions, October, 1798 (CP pg. 45)

**4:30 - 6:00 pm: Session 8**

**Topic:** The "Revolution" of 1800

**Focus:** How did the election of 1800 differ from the election of 1796? Why did Americans seem to consider it even more pivotal?

**Reading:**  
Sharp, 208-249

**Wednesday, June 27**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 9**

**Topic:** The Coup that Failed

**Focus Questions:** Why did some Federalists consider Burr preferable to Jefferson? Why, after the Electoral College tie, did the House finally install Jefferson as president?

**Reading:**  
Sharp, 250-275

**10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 10**

**Topic:** Jefferson's America

**Focus:** How revolutionary was the "Revolution of 1800"?

**Reading:**  
Appleby, 1-52  
Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801 (CP pg. 49)

**4:30 - 6:00 pm: Session 11**

**Topic:** Jefferson in Power

**Focus:** How did Jefferson interpret the Constitution? Why did he glide to re-election in 1804?

**Readings:**  
Appleby, 53-91  
Thomas Jefferson, State of the Union Address, November 8, 1804 (CP pg. 53)  
Thomas Jefferson, Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1805 (CP pg. 57)

**Thursday, June 28**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 12**

**Topic:** Jefferson's Foreign Policy

**Focus Questions:** Why was Jefferson so eager to reach West—and so anxious to isolate America from the troubles of Europe?

**Assigned Readings:**

Appleby, 92-131

Thomas Jefferson, State of the Union Address, October 27, 1807 (CP pg. 61)

Thomas Jefferson, State of the Union Address, November 8, 1808 (CP pg. 65)

*The Richmond Enquirer*, A Modest Proposal, October 11, 1808 (CP pg. 69)

**10:50 am - 12:20 pm: Session 13**

**Topic:** Passing the Torch

**Focus:** To what extent was Jefferson's presidency a success? How were Madison's aims similar and different?

**Readings:**

Appleby, 132-157; Wills, 57-79

James Madison, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1809 (CP pg. 71)

**4:30 - 6:00 pm: Session 14**

**Topic:** The War of 1812

**Focus:** Why did America declare war on Britain? Did the conflict reinforce or redefine American principles?

**Readings:**

Wills, 80-131

James Madison, State of the Union Address, November 5, 1811 (CP pg. 73)

James Madison, State of the Union Address, November 4, 1812 (CP pg. 77)

**Friday, June 29**

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**9:00 am - 10:30 am: Session 15**

**Topic:** The Federalists' Last Gasp

**Focus Questions:** What explains the passing of the Federalist party? Without the Federalists as adversaries, could the Republicans retain their focus and beliefs?

**Readings:**

Wills, 132-164

**10:50 am – 12:20 pm: Session 16**

**Session Review and Questions**

**Readings:**

Alexis de Tocqueville, “Why Democratic Nations Show a More Ardent and Enduring Love of Equality than of Liberty” (CP pg. 83)

**1:30 pm – 3:00 pm: Session 17**

**Final Comprehensive Examination**