

DRAFT: 1/11/2021

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

History 797.02
Fall 2021
Th 9 am - 12 pm
Zoom livestream

Professor Eliga Gould
Office: Horton 418
Email: ehg@unh.edu
Office Hours: T 9 to 11 am
and by appointment

The Right to Bear Arms

Required Reading (available at the University Bookstore and Durham Book Exchange; books that are available as e-books through the Library are so indicated):

Cornell, Saul. *A Well-Regulated Militia: The Founding Fathers and the Origins of Gun Control in America* (2006)
Fischer, David Hackett. *Washington's Crossing* (2004)
Hoffer, Charles Peter. *Past Imperfect: Past Imperfect: Facts, Fictions, Fraud in American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin* (2007) — E-book available at Library
Malcolm, Joyce Lee. *To Keep and Bear Arms: The Origins of an Anglo-American Right* (1994) — E-book available at Library

Canvas:

All supplemental readings are posted on Canvas and are marked [C] in the syllabus.

Course Description

Few issues in American politics are more controversial — or less well understood — than the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Focusing on the Revolutionary era, this colloquium will examine the origins of the current controversies over the American right to bear arms. During the first half of the semester, we will discuss a series of specific topics, including the nature of military service in early modern Britain and colonial America, the prevalence and significance of gun ownership at the time of the Revolution, and the debates that culminated in the adoption of the Bill of Rights.

Organization and Course Requirements

The seminar entails two broad sets of responsibilities. The first of these involves your participation in the weekly discussion sessions. These are set up topically and develop a different aspect of the colloquium's general subject in detail. You should come to each seminar having read all of the assigned readings for that week and be prepared to participate actively and constructively in group discussions. (You should also come to class prepared to take a short quiz, described below.)

As part of this first set of responsibilities, each seminar member will write a five-page (typed, double spaced) Response Paper during the semester's first half on the assigned reading for one week. Response Papers should summarize the argument of the book or article, and connect it to the broader themes of the course. Where appropriate, they may also relate the reading to contemporary issues. Papers are due at the start of class on the same day as the readings are discussed, and the authors will serve as seminar leaders for that class. Your presentation as seminar leader should be based on your own Response Piece and should lay out questions that you found interesting and that you would like the other members of the seminar to discuss. (Because there are fewer weeks than there are members of the seminar, some weeks will have two presenters.)

Your second major responsibility in this seminar is to write a 15-page research paper based on approximately a dozen primary and secondary sources. At least *one* of your sources must be a primary source. We will discuss what a primary source is in class; however, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask me. Because of the primary source requirement, the main constraint on paper topics will be the availability of appropriate documents, either here at UNH or at one of the surrounding libraries. Otherwise, you may write about whatever interests you, so long as it is related to the seminar's general theme and meets with my approval. The weekly seminars should give you some idea of possible topics, but you need not limit yourself to these. PLEASE NOTE: Because of Covid, Much of your research may be online. We will go over using digital sources during class.

You should begin thinking about possible topics immediately. As you will see, there are a number of small assignments due over the course of the semester. I will explain each of these as we come to them. I will hold individual conferences following the Rough Draft, so that we can talk about your projects in greater detail, but you should feel free to speak with me whenever necessary.

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Grade.

Although your final grade will be based in large measure on the grade you receive on the Final Paper, your performance in the other parts of the course is also important. In determining your grade, I will use the following scale:

Class Participation	20%
Quizzes	20%
Response Paper	10%
Rough Draft / Final Paper	50%

Quizzes will take place at the start of class (sharp!) during the first half of the semester. Each quiz will consist of five questions and will be based on the assigned reading for that week. The quizzes are designed to test basic reading comprehension, and should pose no problem, as long as you have done the reading for that week.

I will evaluate all written work, including the Response Paper, the Rough Draft, and the Final Paper, on the basis of the clarity of the writing, the perceptiveness and originality of the argument, and the use of evidence. (We will discuss all of these qualities in class.) Both the Rough Draft and the Final Paper will receive letter grades. In determining the “final” grade for the Rough Draft / Final Paper portion of the grade, I will only count the higher of the two grades for the Final Paper. Thus, if the grade that you receive for your Rough Draft is higher than the one for the Final Paper, I will use that one. If you are satisfied with the grade that you receive on your Rough Draft, you may submit it without revision as your Final Paper (or tell me to use the grade you received on the Rough Draft); however, to pass the course, you must turn in a Rough Draft. When you submit your Rough Draft, you should include the graded copy of your Prospectus and Bibliography, and include the graded copy of your Rough Draft with the Final Paper.

Class Participation covers the remaining assignments — attendance, participation in seminar discussions, the paragraph describing your paper, the Prospectus and Bibliography, and the oral presentation — each of which will each receive a grade of “check,” “check plus,” or “check minus.” In evaluating these preliminary assignments, I will ordinarily award full credit (denoted by a “check”), with excellence receiving extra credit and points being deducted only for work that is missing, sloppy, late, or very poor.

PLEASE NOTE: Although “Class Participation” only counts for 20% of the grade, you must complete all of the written requirements in order to pass this seminar, and anyone who misses class repeatedly or stops attending altogether will be in danger of failing. There will also be penalties for turning work in late.

Academic Honesty.

Every assignment that you submit while you are a student at UNH should be the exclusive result of your own efforts, and when you draw on the work of other scholars, you are expected to provide a full citation showing where you obtained the information you are using (even when you do not quote directly from the work in question). Failure to comply with these guidelines is known as plagiarism. Anyone who plagiarizes the work of someone else, or who helps another student to commit plagiarism, will fail this class and can be expelled from the University. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, familiarize yourself with the “Academic Honesty” section of the UNH Student Handbook.

Course Outline

Feb 4 Introduction

Reading: Second Amendment to the U. S. Constitution (1791) and Article 10 of the New Hampshire Constitution (1790), to be distributed in class.

Feb 11 The Controversy over the Right

Reading: *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U. S. 570 (2008), [C]; Lawrence Delbert Cress, “An Armed Community: The Origins and Meaning of the Right to Bear Arms,” *JAH* (1984), [C]; Sanford Levinson, “The Embarrassing Second Amendment,” *Yale Law Review* (1989), [C]; Robert H. Churchill, “The Amendment That Just Won’t Go Away,” *RAH* (2003), [C].

Feb 18 The Controversy over History

Reading: Hoffer, *Past Imperfect*, intro., chaps. 1-5, 8, and conclusion.

[ONE PARAGRAPH DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED TOPIC DUE BY NOON ON FEB 19.]

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Feb 25 The English Context

Reading: Malcolm, *To Keep and Bear Arms*; Eliga H. Gould, “What Is the Country? Patriotism and the Language of Popularity during the English Militia Reform of 1757,” in Donna Landry, et al., eds., *The Country and the City Revisited* (1999), in [C].

Mar 4 The Experience of War

Film: *Culloden* – viewing arrangements TBA.

[PROSPECTUS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE BY NOON ON Mar 5.]

Mar 11 NO CLASS — INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES ON PROSPECTI AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Mar 18 The Revolutionary War

Reading: Fischer, *Washington’s Crossing*; John Shy, “The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War,” in *A People Numerous and Armed*, [C].

Mar 25 Race, Gender and Guns

Reading: Michelle LeMaster, “Guns and Garters: Men, Women, and the Trade,” in *Brothers Born of One Mother: British-Native American Relations in the Colonial Southeast* (2014), [C]; Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan, *Arming Slaves: From Classical Times to the Modern Age* (2006), excerpts, [C].

Apr 1 The Early Republic

Reading: Cornell, *A Well-Regulated Militia*; review *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U. S. 570 (2008), [C], from Feb 4.

Apr 8 The Politics of Gun Control Today

Film: *Frontline — Gunned Down: The Power of the NRA* — viewing arrangements TBA

[ROUGH DRAFT OF PAPER DUE BY NOON ON APR 12.]

Apr 15 NO CLASS — INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES ON ROUGH DRAFTS

Apr 22 ORAL PRESENTATIONS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Apr 29 NO CLASS — OPTIONAL INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

May 6 FINAL MEETING — FINAL PAPERS DUE AT THE START OF CLASS