

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History

Semester II Year 1981-82

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
343/ (603)	American Colonial Society	D. S. Lovejoy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

History 343 American colonial society, is a course aimed at an explanation of the ideas and events which surrounded settlers in the British possessions of the American "wilderness" between 1607 and the middle of the eighteenth century. Among the topics explored are the rationale for colonization; development of a plantation economy and the emergence of Black Slavery; Puritanism (its significance and legacy); the British colonial system (economic and political) and colonists' reaction to it; progress toward political maturity; the idiosyncrasies of a colonial economy; and the structure of society. Overriding themes throughout are the colonists' conceptions of themselves in the New World; the demand for an equality of Englishmen within the empire; and the predominance of religion in colonists' thought and culture.

The purpose or goal of this course is that of any history course worth its salt: To stimulate the student to think, through presentation of the above substance of history in lectures, pertinent books, and discussions. Facts, events, ideas of the past are only the materials on which the student brings his critical faculties to bear through guidance and training, the better to evaluate the human predicament, past and present. More specifically: to demonstrate that a knowledge of the colonial period lays a necessary basis for an understanding of later American history and particularly the American Revolution.

LECTURES

There will be three lectures a week plus an hour of discussion (laced with some flexibility). The instructor likes to teach discussion sections and believes they can be rewarding to both students and himself. Therefore, he fully expects active interest and informed discussion--not to mention good attendance. Two classes will be reserved for slide lectures on art and architecture.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

(1) A six-week's essay examination. (2) Due about the twelfth week a paper (10-12 pp.) based on original and secondary sources, explaining some event, theme, idea, or development in early American history which has particularly caught your attention. A list of suggested topics will be distributed in the early weeks of the course. As an alternative to this, a student may write an essay or book report of the same length comparing two books which appear on the reading list--not including books under required reading. (3) A final examination with a good deal of choice in questions in order to accommodate students' particular interests.

GRADING

As equitable weighing as possible of the various parts of a student's performance, including discussions. Lovejoy does not believe that fixing irrevocable percentages to each piece of written work for determining a final grade is conducive to the encouragement of an expanding and deepening interest in history. A poor showing in a six-weeks' examination will not seriously drag down the grade of a student who can write an original paper and who ends the course "going away" by

-2-

means of the final examination. However, the reverse is also true. A flashy six-weeks' examination will not pull much weight in the final grade of a student who cannot fulfill his or her earlier promise.

Coming to a lecture or discussion section "cold" defeats its purpose. Lectures, reading, discussions feed upon each other and should be experienced simultaneously.