THE ERA OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

History 344                                      Jean B. Lee
T. Th, 9:30-10:45 a.m.                             Spring Semester 1992

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In ways great and small, the American Revolution touched the life of
every person who lived through it and strongly influenced the subsequent
history of the United States. This course traces conditions in eighteenth-
century America that culminated in revolution, examines the remarkable amount
of political experimentation that led to creation of the Republic, considers
how ordinary men and women responded to and shaped events, and assesses the
impact of the Revolutionary era upon subsequent American development.

REQUIRED READINGS: (Note: All readings have been placed on reserve at the
State Historical Society of Wisconsin.)

Available at the University Book Store:
Kenneth Silverman (ed.) The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
I.R. Christie, Crisis of Empire: Great Britain and the American
Colonies, 1754-1783
Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of
American Women, 1750-1800
Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution
Thomas Paine, Common Sense
Marcus Cunliffe, George Washington: Man and Monument
Michael Kammen (ed.), The Origins of the Constitution: A Documentary
History

Available at Kinkos as a packet:
Richard B. Morris, "Meet Dr. Franklin"
Anne Firor Scott, "Self-Portraits"
Winthrop Jordan, "First Impressions"
G.I. Jones and O. Equiano, "Olaudah Equiano of the Niger Ibo"
Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on
British Mainland America"
John Shy, "The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War"
John C. Dann (ed.), selections from The Revolution Remembered
Alfred F. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston
Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution"
Merrill D. Peterson, "Jefferson's Severest Contest"
William Freehling, "The Founding Fathers and Slavery"
Gary B. Nash, "Forging Freedom: The Emancipation Experience in the
Northern Seaport Cities, 1775-1820"
CLASS SCHEDULE:

Jan. 21  Introductory Session
Jan. 23  The American Revolution in Historical Perspective
Jan. 28  The World in 1776
Jan. 30  The British Empire in the Eighteenth Century
Feb. 4   A Land of Diversity: Americans in the Revolutionary Era
Feb. 6   Film: The Gunsmith of Williamsburg
Feb. 11  Degrees of Freedom
Feb. 13  The Enslaved
Feb. 18  Slide Lecture: Visual Images of Revolutionary America
Feb. 20  The Enlightenment
Feb. 25  Evangelicalism
Feb. 27  The Nature of American Politics
Mar. 3   The Seven Years' War
Mar. 5   MID-TERM EXAM
Mar. 10  SPRING VACATION
Mar. 12  SPRING VACATION
Mar. 17  The Stamp Act Crisis
Mar. 19  From Resistance to Revolution
Mar. 24  Independence
Mar. 26  The War Years, 1775-78
Mar. 31  The War Years, 1778-81
Apr. 2   Civilians and War
Apr. 7   Musical Reflections of the American Revolution
Apr. 9   The Confederation
Apr. 14  Experiments in Republicanism: The Sovereign States
Apr. 16  Years of Disillusionment: The Crisis of the 1780s
Apr. 21  Creation of the Constitution
Apr. 23  Preparation for the ratification debate
Apr. 28  Debate: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists
Apr. 30  Launching the Experiment in Republicanism
May 5   Legacies of the Revolutionary Era, Part 1
May 7   Legacies of the Revolutionary Era, Part 2
READINGS ASSIGNMENTS FOR DISCUSSION SECTIONS:

Jan. 29  Franklin, *Autobiography*
         Morris, "Meet Dr. Franklin"

Feb. 5   Christie, *Crisis of Empire*, introduction & chap. 1

Feb. 12  Scott, "Self-Portraits"
         PAPER DUE (4 pgs.)

Feb. 19  Winthrop Jordan, "First Impressions"
         Jones and Equiano, "Olaudah Equiano of the Niger Ibo"
         Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society
         on British Mainland North America"


Mar. 4   Christie, *Crisis of Empire*, chap. 2-5

Mar. 18  Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, chaps. 5-6

Mar. 25  Paine, *Common Sense*

Apr. 1   Shy, "The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War"
         Christie, *Crisis of Empire*, chap. 6 and conclusion
         Selections from Dann (ed.), *The Revolution Remembered*

Apr. 8   Cunliffe, *Washington: Man and Monument*

Apr. 15  Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston
         Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution"
         Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, chaps. 6-7
         PAPER DUE (4 pgs.)

         1-26, and Documents No. 1-2, 10-12, 15-17, 19, 22, 24-25,
         29, 31-34, 37, 43, 49-50, 52, 54-57, 60, 62-65, 70-71, 74,
         78, 80-83, 85

Apr. 29  Freehling, "The Founding Fathers and Slavery"
         Kammen, *Origins of the American Constitution*, pp. 363-84

May 6    Peterson, "Jefferson's Severest Contest"
         Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*, chaps. 8-conclusion
         Nash, "Forging Freedom: The Emancipation Experience in the
         Northern Seaport Cities"

GRADING: 15% for each paper, 20% discussion (including the ratification
debate), 20% mid-term exam, 30% final exam
Much more than a revolt against British taxes and trade regulations, the American Revolution was the first modern revolution. It marked the first time in history that a people fought for their independence in the name of certain universal principles such as rule of law, constitutional rights, and popular sovereignty. The roots of the American Revolution can be traced to the year 1763 when British leaders began to tighten imperial reins. Once harmonious relations between Britain and the colonies became increasingly conflict-riven. Britain’s land policy prohibiting settlement in the West irritated colonists as did the arrival of British troops. The American Revolution was a colonial revolt that took place between 1765 and 1783. The American Patriots in the Thirteen Colonies won independence from Great Britain, becoming the United States of America. They defeated the British in the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) in alliance with France and others. Members of American colonial society argued the position of “no taxation without representation”, starting with the Stamp Act Congress in 1765. They rejected the authority of the British British general Burgoyne’s surrender at Saratoga in the American Revolution. Defending the Colonies against attack by the French and others had cost the British a great deal of money. As a result, the British had very high taxes in their country. They thus decided to shift some of their financial burden to the colonists. Tensions such as these eventually led to the writing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. A year earlier, the War of Independence, also known as the American Revolution, began. When the British finally surrendered on October 19, 1781, Americans were officially independent of Britain and set about establishing their own government.