

HIST 4xx: The History and Philosophy of the American Founding

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This three-credit history graduate seminar, offered in conjunction with the following program <https://www.newberry.org/07172017-principles-americas-founding> (under the aegis of the Jack Miller Center, the Newberry Library, the Graham School at the University of Chicago, and the Montesquieu Forum at Roosevelt), will introduce teachers to key historiographical and philosophical questions and themes related to the founding era of the United States. In addition to attending any of the three weeks of above-cited program, teachers who wish to receive graduate credit will meet three times for half-day sessions (on weekends) in the fall of 2017.

Writing Assignments:

Two writing assignments will be required, both of which are due by the end of 2017. Please email the papers to sfrink@roosevelt.edu and sminkov@roosevelt.edu.

1. A historiographical paper

Based primarily on Gibson's *Interpreting the Founding*, carefully analyze the fundamental assumptions and methodological characteristics of at least four of the following approaches to Founding: Founding-Progressive, Lockean/liberal, Republican, Scottish Enlightenment, multicultural, and multiple-traditions approaches, and the Unionist or Federalist paradigm.

15-pp (double-spaced).

2. A philosophical paper:

Based on Gibson's *Understanding the Founding*, Lerner's *The Thinking Revolutionary*, and Pangle's *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism*, write a paper exploring the following questions: What are the theoretical foundations of the American Founding? What ideas about human nature (its [a]moral character and its fulfillment/happiness) and society do they presuppose or attempt to establish? How democratic is the Framers' Constitution? And what is the relation of the Founding to Christianity? In addressing these questions, what do you find to be the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches you discussed in your first paper?

20 pp. (double-spaced).

Historiography

Alan Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding: Guide to the Enduring Debates over the Origins and Foundations of the American Republic*. University Press of Kansas, 2006.

Caroline Winterer. *American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason*. Yale University Press. 2016.

Philosophical Considerations

Alan Gibson, *Understanding the Founding: The Crucial Questions*. University Press of Kansas, 2007.

Ralph Lerner. *The Thinking Revolutionary. Principles and Practice in the New Republic*. Cornell University Press. 1987.

Thomas Pangle, *The Spirit of Moral Republicanism: The Moral Vision of the American Founding and the Philosophy of Locke*. The University of Chicago Press. 1988.