

MLS 583/Spring 2020
Hamilton and the Founding Fathers

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Office hours--S, 9-10 am and online

Course Description: Characterized most recently by Lin-Manuel Miranda as the “ten-dollar Founding Father without a father,” the reputation of Alexander Hamilton has vacillated wildly over the years. Over the past two centuries, he has by turns been vilified as a cunning, aristocratic crypto-monarchist out to strangle American democracy in its cradle, and hailed as a steely-eyed visionary who secured the economic foundations of the republic and fathered the modern American industrial state. Yet Alexander Hamilton played a pivotal role in both the American Revolution and the formation of the Constitution and his life offers a lens into many of the defining moments of the founding of the United States.

How one views Hamilton will necessarily depend upon how one views the great debates of the early republic over the scope and nature of government power, and of its role in shaping American society. Too frequently judgment on these essential questions is formed with reference only to Hamilton’s later works, most especially his contributions to the *Federalist Papers*. By reading his earliest public writings as well as those most commonly assigned, students will be better able to assess for themselves Hamilton’s core commitments and his place in the American political tradition. Did he remain constant in his most basic beliefs, or did he indeed undergo a radical reconsideration of the nature of American political and economic liberty?

This course draws on the music of *Hamilton*, recent scholarship and key primary source readings to reassess Hamilton’s influence upon the key events of his lifetime as well as his legacy. The goals of the course are two-fold: 1) to understand the key personalities, debates and decisions of the Revolution and the Early National Period and 2) to model and practice the most effective teaching strategies for use in your own civics and history classrooms.

Class Meetings and Credit: **MLS 583 will meet on campus from 10 am to noon on the following Saturdays--1/25, 2/1, 2/15, 2/29, 3/14, 3/28, and 4/18.** On those weeks when class is not held on campus--2/8, 2/22, 3/7, 3,22, 4/4 and 4/11--students will complete a self-paced learning module posted on Moodle, with annotations and comments posted on *Perusall*. Please see the **Technology Information Page** on Moodle for information about how to use *Perusall*. This course carries 1.0 Lake Forest College credit, which is equivalent to four semester credit hours. Students should expect to devote a minimum of 12 hours of total work per week (in-class time plus out-of-class work) to this course.

Required Texts: All course readings will be posted on Moodle. Given the importance attached to annotating the texts and citing evidence for your posts and responses to questions, **you are required to bring either a hard copy or an accessible copy (on laptop) with you to class.**

Required soundtrack: Original Broadway recording, [Hamilton: An American Musical](#)

Optional text- Ron Chernow, [Alexander Hamilton](#). While you do not need to read this biography to do well in this class or to fulfill any requirement, reading it will provide a much deeper historical context for both Lin-Manuel Miranda’s musical and the assigned reading materials.

Optional podcast -- [The Hamilcast: A Hamilton Podcast](#)

This 145 episode podcast is a deep dive into Chernow’s biography of Hamilton and the backstory behind all the tracks of the Hamilton musical, with special guests each episode. A great resource if you happen to be discussion leader or just obsessed with all things Hamilton!

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 25 (on campus)

Immigration, the Slave Trade and Social Mobility in British North America

READ: Myron Magnet, “Alexander Hamilton: Modern America’s Founding Father”;

Hamilton, *Letter to Edward Stevens (1769)*;

Hamilton, *Account of a Hurricane (1772)*

LISTEN: *Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, Sir* -- Hamilton album (original Broadway recording);

NPR, All Songs + 1: [Why “Hamilton” the Musical Works](#).

February 1 (on campus)

Revolutionary Ideology: Hamilton’s early writings

READ: A Westchester Farmer, (aka Samuel Seabury), *Free Thoughts on the Proceedings of the Continental Congress (1774)*;

A Friend to America (aka Alexander Hamilton), *A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress...* (1774);

Diane Durante, “Hamilton v. Seabury”

LISTEN: *My Shot; Farmer Refuted; You’ll be Back*--Hamilton album

February 8 (online)

Slavery: Hamilton and the Founding Fathers

READ: *Lord Dunmore Promises Freedom to Slaves who Fight For Britain* (1775);
Declaration of Independence, Deleted Slavery Passage (1776);
Slaves' Petition for Freedom to the Massachusetts Legislature (1777);
Hamilton, *Letter to John Jay* (1779);
Leslie Harris, *The Greatest City in the World?: Slavery in New York in the Age of Hamilton*
Nikole Hannah-Jones, Excerpt from "The Idea of America", NYTimes, **The 1619 Project**
LISTEN: Podcast, [The Declaration of Independence's Deleted Slavery Passage](#)
My Shot--Hamilton album

February 15 (on campus)

Washington and Hamilton, Pt. I: the Revolutionary War

READ: Willard Sterne, [Smithsonian Magazine](#), *Hamilton Takes Command*;
General George Washington Asks Congress for an Effective Army (1776);
Washington's Circular to the New Jersey Magistrates (1780);
Hamilton, *Letter to George Washington*(1783);
Ed Crews, *The Newburgh Incident: George Washington Stops a Mutiny*;
LISTEN: *Right Hand Man*; *Stay Alive*, *Ten Duel Commandments*; *Meet Me Inside* ; *Guns and Ships*; *Battle of Yorktown*--Hamilton album

February 22 (online)

Washington and Hamilton, Pt. II: The Constitution and Federalism

READ: Hamilton, *Plan of Government*, June 18, 1787;
Hamilton, *Federalist Papers* -- No.35, No.70 and No. 84;
Hamilton, *Letter to Washington* (1788);
Hamilton, *Letter to Washington* (1789)
LISTEN: NPR podcast, [Reconstituting the Constitution: How to Rewrite It](#)
Non-Stop--Hamilton album;

February 29 (on campus)

Bipartisanship and Compromise in the Early Republic

READ: Robert Sloan, "The Great Debate: Hamilton, Jefferson and the Fight Over Assumption"
Robert Grogg, "Where, Oh Where, Should the Capital Be?" (whitehousehistory.org)
Hamilton, *Report on Public Credit II*;
Hamilton, *Opinion on the Constitutionality of a National Bank* (1791)
Jefferson, *Opinion on the Constitutionality of the Bill for Establishing a National Bank* (1791)
LISTEN: WNYC podcast, [Money Talking: The Father of US Finance Goes to Broadway](#)
What'd I Miss?, *The Room Where it Happened*, *Cabinet Battle #1*-Hamilton album

March 7 (online)

Hamilton v. Jefferson: The Emergence of Faction

READ: Ben Heinemann, Atlantic, *The Origins of Today's Bitter Partisanship: The Founding Fathers*

Hamilton, *Letter to Edward Carrington (1792)*;

Hamilton, *An American No. 1 (1792)*;

Hamilton, *Letter to George Washington (1792)*

Jefferson, *Letter to George Washington (1792)*

Washington, *Proclamation of Neutrality (1793)*

Hamilton, *Defense of the Neutrality Proclamation; Pacificus (1793)*

OPTIONAL--DSilva, *Hamilton-An American Musical: The Facts Behind the Music:*

LISTEN: *Cabinet Battle #2, Washington on Your Side--Hamilton album*

March 14 (on campus)

The Two-Party System and Presidential Succession

READ: Renee C. Romano, "Hamilton: A New Civic Myth"

Hamilton, *Memo on Design of the Great Seal of the United States*;

Hamilton, *A Draft of the Farewell Address (1796)*;

LISTEN: [Hamilcast podcast #44--Washington on Your Side](#)

One Last Time; I Know Him; The Adams' Administration--Hamilton album,

March 21 (online)

Freedom of the Press I-- Faction and the Reynolds Affair

READ: Angela Serratore, Smithsonian Magazine, *Hamilton's Adultery and Apology*;

Catherine Allgor, "Masculinity, Marriage and Gender in Hamilton"

Hamilton, *The Reynolds Pamphlet(1797)*;

Hamilton, *Letter to Eliza Hamilton (1798)*

LISTEN: [Hamilcast podcast #47--Do You Promise not to Tell Another Soul What You Saw?](#)

Say No to This; We Know; The Reynolds Pamphlet--Hamilton album

March 28 (on campus)

Freedom of the Press II: The Alien and Sedition Acts

READ: Craig R. Smith, "Silencing the Opposition: The Alien and Sedition Crisis";

Hamilton, *Letter to Timothy Pickering (1798)*

Hamilton, *Letter to Theodore Sedgwick (1799)*;

LISTEN: [NPR podcast, Vermont's Disputatious Statesman Matthew Lyon....](#);

[Ben Franklin's World podcast, The Alien and Sedition Acts](#)

April 4 (online)

The Election of 1800: Federalists v. Democratic-Republicans

READ: John Ferling, Smithsonian Magazine, “*Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr and the Election of 1800*;

Hamilton, *Letter from Alexander Hamilton, Concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esq. President of the United States (1800)*;

LISTEN: *The Election of 1800; Your Obedient Servant; The Adams Administration*--Hamilton album

April 11 (online)

Burr and Hamilton: The Rivalry and the Duel

READ: Joanne Freeman, *Dueling as Politics*;

Freeman, *Early American Honor Culture*;

Hamilton, *Statement Regarding the Duel with Burr (4 July 1804)*;

Joint Statement by William P. Van Ness and Nathaniel Pendleton on the Duel between Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr (17 July 1804)

LISTEN: [NBC podcast: Why is this happening? Unearthing the connection between politics and violence](#);

Ten Duel Commandments; Blow Us All Away; Stay Alive; It’s Quiet Uptown; The World Was Wide Enough-- Hamilton album

April 18 (on campus)-- Class presentations on final projects

April 25-- Work on final projects and conferences if needed

May 2-- FINAL PROJECTS DUE (submit online)

GRADING METRIC

Class Participation (Physical): 30%

Class Participation (Virtual): 30%

Curriculum Project/Research Paper/Presentation: 40%

Attendance and Participation (Physical): It is important that you come to class fully prepared, which means both completing the assigned reading and being ready to engage in a substantive class discussion. While participation is important, and will be graded, so is being respectful and attentive to others. Responding to others' points by name is the best way to build a genuine conversation. Because we are discussing politics, it is possible that the conversation may get heated at times. I think it is healthy to engage with the arguments of others, especially those with whom we disagree, but being respectful and willing to consider other points of view are equally important. **Given that this course will be run as a seminar, being prepared, engaged, and vocal will be crucial to making this course as fun and interesting as it can possibly be.**

Participation (Virtual): During the weeks we are not meeting, you will be required to post a minimum of 3 comments on *Perusall*. While I will not be counting words, each annotation or comment should be a few sentences in length. In addition to responding to the reading assignments, you are strongly encouraged to directly respond to the comments and/or questions posted by your classmates. My hope is that we will be able to continue the conversations we have in the classroom in an online setting. Additionally, there will be two short writing assignments, **warm-up response** and a **cognitive wrapper** which students must submit each week when the class is not held on campus.

Curriculum Project/Research Paper/Presentation: There are two options for your major assignment for the course:

- (1) a project where you and other members of a small group develop an interactive learning experience for your own high school course(s).
- (2) a 15-20 page research paper on an approved topic.

All students will be required to make a presentation of their work-in-progress to the class at the end of the semester. More details and advice about this assignment will be forthcoming once the semester begins.

Statement on Academic Integrity and Honesty

Academic integrity is the single most important part of the learning process. This class will function with the highest standards of honesty and commitment. I expect that all written work performed for this class will be of your own creation and all works used (even your own words taken from previous papers and writings) will be explicitly acknowledged by author and source. As your professor, it is my responsibility to create an environment for learning that is in accordance with these standards. Please read and familiarize yourself with the Academic Honesty Policy in the Student Handbook <http://www.lakeforest.edu/live/files/397>. If you have any questions about academic honesty and whether you are acting in accordance with the policy, always consult me

Statement about disabilities services

If you are a student who needs an accommodation because of a disability or medical or psychological condition that limits your ability to fully participate in this course, please contact Teryn Robinson, Assistant Dean of Faculty for Learning Support, to document your disability with the College and with the professor of this course. Academic accommodations should be reasonable and not alter the fundamental nature of this course. Because it can take a week or more to arrange requested accommodations, you are encouraged to establish your semester accommodations as early in the semester as possible. Contact Teryn Robinson by email, robinson@lakeforest.edu or phone, 847-735-5167. For more information about services for students with disabilities at LakeForest College, see, <http://www.lakeforest.edu/academics/resources/disability/>

Statement about sexual misconduct

Lake Forest College is committed to providing students with a safe learning environment. College policy prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, discrimination, non-consensual sexual intercourse and contact, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. More information regarding the College's Policy can be found at:

<https://www.lakeforest.edu/sexualmisconduct/>. As a faculty member, I am a responsible employee, which means that I am required by College policy and federal law to report incidents of sexual misconduct of which I am informed to the Title IX Coordinator, Joan Slavin, slavin@lakeforest.edu, 847-735-6009. The Title IX Coordinator's job is to ensure that the reporting student receives the resources and support that he or she needs, while also determining whether or what further action is necessary. If you have been subject to sexual misconduct and wish to seek support without having the incident reported to the Title IX Coordinator, there are confidential employees you can talk to on and off campus. They are:

- Lake Forest College Counseling Services: off-campus 847-735-5240, on campus x5240 during business hours, or after hours by contacting Public Safety at 847-735-5555 or on campus at x5555
- Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center in Gurnee: 847-872-7799
- National Domestic Violence Hotline: 800-799-SAFE
- Illinois Domestic Violence Help Line: 877-863-6338 (Chicago area)