

## **HIST 96.17 Political Thought in Colonial America**

**Instructor: Paul Musselwhite.**

This seminar will explore the ideas that helped to construct and deconstruct the British Empire in America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. While political, social, and economic transformations were gripping European society in these years, colonists in the New World were provided with unique opportunities to test and implement these ideas in the territories they conquered. Some colonial thinkers wrote texts that are rightly considered as landmarks in intellectual history, but far more men and women were actively involved in the business of politics and constructed new ideas through the process of shaping their societies. This seminar will explore the ideas that emerged from both the great works and the practical documents involved in forging political institutions in the colonial context. The seminar will be arranged around five key political ideas: Humanism, Puritanism, Mercantilism, Protestantism, and Republicanism, with topics ranging from the maintenance of social order to the dispossession of native peoples, and from the justification of slavery to the legality of smuggling. Through these studies we will explore different approaches to writing the political history of the Atlantic world, the British Empire, and the foundations of the United States. Students will be given the tools to undertake their own research on any aspect of the political and intellectual questions thrown up by the process of British colonization in the Americas.

It is helpful, but not required, for students to have taken any of the following courses before taking this seminar: HIST 9.1, HIST 11, HIST 43.2, HIST 61

### **Distributive and/or World Culture**

WCult:W

### **Offered**

16X: 10A 18S: 3B

### **Department-Specific Course Categories**

Major Dist: US.