READINGS IN COLONIAL NORTH AMERICA

What used to be thought of as “colonial American history” or, more recently, “colonial British North American history,” has now become part of what might be called “early modern Atlantic history.” This seminar will explore the strengths and weaknesses of that perspective.

Readings

Each week everyone will read the core assignment. Beginning in the second week, each person will also select an item from the list of secondary titles; there will be no duplication of secondary readings. Generally, an individual will be free to choose the work that most interests him/her, but some “volunteers” may be sacrificed to ensure that interpretive diversity prevails. All core readings have been placed on three-hour reserve at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library for the semester. Secondary readings are not reserved. Most monographs and journals can be found in the Library’s collection [WHS]; non-circulating copies of a few journals (e.g., Journal of American History) live in the Reading Room. Copies of numerous historical journals, notably the William and Mary Quarterly, are available through JSTOR (www.jstor.com) or other Internet links (for which, go to the journal name in MadCat). Other items can be found elsewhere on campus [indicated as C = College Library, Helen C. White Hall; CLC = in my possession; E = Ethnic Studies Collection, Helen C. White Hall; G = Geography Library, Science Hall; I = Internet via MadCat; L = Law School Library, Law School; M = Memorial Library; RR = Reading Room, Wisconsin Historical Society Library; UGR = 1191 Collection, Helen C. White Hall].

Written Assignments

You will write three papers, 7-8 pages, typed, double-spaced. You may choose which two of the first four papers to confront, but everyone must write the final essay. You need advert only to course readings but may include any relevant materials. If you wish to write on a different topic, please discuss your proposal with me.

Due Friday, February 9 - Evaluate the role native peoples played in the construction of North American colonial empires.

Due Friday, March 2 - Discuss the characteristics of the English Atlantic in the mid-seventeenth century.

Due Friday, March 23 - Analyze the relationship between slavery, class-formation, and political authority in early modern America.

Due Friday, April 13 - Assess the cogency of the constructs “Atlantic world” and “frontier” for making sense of what transpired in Anglo-America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Due Monday, May 14 - Discuss the degree to which the political and economic dynamics of the First British Empire may be said to have generated the American Revolution.
Rewrite Policy

You may rewrite either or both of the first two assigned papers (time constraints prohibit rewriting the final one), but only after talking with me about such details as the new due date and the kinds of changes to be made. You must inform me of your decision to rewrite a paper by the Friday following the class session at which I first return the original version. You will ordinarily receive one week to rewrite, but I will be flexible about negotiating extensions for good cause. The old draft (plus any separate sheet of comments) must accompany the new version. Rewriting cannot lower your grade (nor can changing your mind about handing in a revised paper), but it does not by itself guarantee a higher one; you must substantially rework the essay, following my comments and initiating your own improvements too.

Grading

Simplicity itself. The papers and class discussion each count 25%.

Incompletes

The Gendzel Protocol governs the assigning of Incompletes: in fairness to those students who turn their work in on time, I will not grant an Incomplete for reasons other than Acts of God or other extraordinary disasters (covered in the “Proclamation,” p. 17 infra). You may have an Incomplete without penalty only in such cases; in all other instances, an Incomplete carries a grade penalty of ½-step.

Email

Everyone in the class must have a personal email account, available from DoIT. To contact me alone, send messages to clcohen@wisc.edu. To contact everyone in the class (including me) simultaneously, send messages to history910-1-s07@lists.wisc.edu.

I. EMPIRES AND AMERINDIANS

JAN. 24 - THE BIG PICTURE

**JAN. 31 - CONTESTED MORAINES**

**Core reading:** Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, 1-412 (skim remainder)

**Secondary reading:**

**Borderlands, Frontiers, and the Middle Ground**


Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*, 158-87


**The French and the Amerindians**


Olive Patricia Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas*, 251-70


Patricia Galloway, *Choctaw Genesis 1500-1700*, 164-204

Bruce Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers: Canada’s “Heroic Age” Reconsidered*, 226-97

Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in A Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*, 77-104

**The Fur Trade**

Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, 207-29 [M, UGR]

Louise Dechêne, *Habitants and Merchants in Seventeenth-Century Montreal*, 90-125

W. J. Eccles, *Essays on New France*, 79-95


**Warfare and Diplomacy**


José António Brandão, “Your Fyre Shall Burn no More”: Iroquois Policy toward New France and Its Native Allies to 1701, 117-31


Brett Rushforth, “Slavery, the Fox Wars, and the Limits of Alliance,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 63 (2006), 53-80

FEB. 7 - INDIAN GIVERS

Core reading: Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, The Indian Nations & The British Empire*

Secondary reading:

Overviews


Amerindians and Imperial Warfare

Colin Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America*, 152-77
Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600-1850*, 168-202 [M]
Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*, 151-88
Armstrong Starkey, *European and Native American Warfare, 1675-1815*, 83-110

Backcountry Interactions

Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley*, 3-45
Jane Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians & Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763*, 264-308
Peter C. Mancall, *Deadly Medicine: Indians and Alcohol in Early America*, 155-67

The Seven Years War

Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years’ War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766*, 535-53
David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac’s Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America*, 244-75
Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies & Tribes in the Seven Years War in America*, 438-53
Timothy J. Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754, 117-40*
II. SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FOUNDATIONS OF ANGLO-AMERICA

FEB. 14 - HIVINGS OUT

Core reading: Alison Games, Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World

Secondary reading:

Overview

Nicholas Canny, “English Migration into and across the Atlantic during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in idem, Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500-1800, 39-75 [M]

African Diasporas

Michael A. Gomez, Exchanging our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South, 114-53


John Thornton, Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680, 152-82 [M, UGR]


Founding New England


David Grayson Allen, In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transferal of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century, 55-81

James F. Cooper, Tenacious of Their Liberties: The Congregationalists in Colonial Massachusetts, 23-45

Gloria L. Main, Peoples of a Spacious Land: Families and Culture in Colonial New England, 38-61

David Jaffee, People of the Wachusett: Greater New England in History & Memory 1630-1860, 1-22

Migrations


Carl Bridenbaugh, Vexed and Troubled Englishmen, 1590-1642, 394-433

David Cressy, Coming Over: Migration and Communication between England and New England in the Seventeenth Century, 235-62

J.H. Elliott, Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830, 29-56

David Hackett Fischer and James C. Kelly, Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement, 12-73

Planting Virginia


David Hackett Fischer, Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America, 240-80

James Horn, Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake, 78-120


Darrett B. and Anita H. Rutman, A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia, 1650-1750, 36-60
FEB. 21 - THE FIRST ATLANTIC SETTLEMENT

Core reading: Carla Gardina Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640-1661*

Secondary reading:

**Imperial Governance and Commerce**

Wesley Frank Craven, *The Colonies in Transition 1660-1713*, 32-68

**Liberties, Rights, and Freedoms**

David Armitage, “Empire and Liberty: A Republican Dilemma,” in *idem, Greater Britain, 1516-1776: Essays in Atlantic History*, 1-21

**Religion in England and the Colonies**

J. C. D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty 1660-1832: Political discourse and social dynamics in the Anglo-American world*, 20-45
Andrew Murphy, *Conscience and Community: Revisiting Toleration and Religious Dissent in Early Modern England and America*, 75-122 (WHSM)
FEB. 28 - MASTER CLASS

Core reading: Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*

Secondary reading:

Piracy


Angus Konstam, *Blackbeard: America’s Most Notorious Pirate*, 93-122

Kris E. Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750*, 96-130 [M]


Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates*, 1-26

The English West Indies


Larry Gragg, ‘Englishmen Transplanted’: *The English Colonization of Barbados 1627-1660*, 58-87 [M]

Karen Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630-1641: The Other Puritan Colony*, 50-80


Planter Society and Culture


Derrick Knight, *Gentlemen of Fortune: the Men Who Made Their Fortunes in Britain’s Slave Colonies*, 20-35

David Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity During the Age of Abolition*, 10-40 [G]


Sugar and Slaves

Virginia Bernhard, *Slave and Slaveholder in Bermuda 1616-1782*, 94-147 [M]


Nathalie Dessens, *Myths of the Plantation Society: Slavery in the American South and the West Indies*, 55-97


Roderick A. McDonald, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana*, 16-49

James E. McWilliams, *A Revolution In Eating: How the Quest for Food Shaped America*, 19-53 [M]

Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: the Place of Sugar in Modern History*, 20-73 [C]
III. SLAVERY AND SOCIETY

MARCH 7 - THINKING DECISION


Secondary reading:

The Origins of Slavery

April Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, 137-68
Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor*, 1-46

Patriarchy

Rhys Isaac, *Landon Carter’s Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation*, 37-54
Cynthia A. Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women’s Place in the Early South, 1700-1835*, 36-68, 212-18
Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers & Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society*, 96-137

Slave Law

Malick W. Ghachem, “The Slave’s Two Bodies: The Life of an American Legal Fiction,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 60 (2003), 809-842
Alan Watson, *Slave Law in the Americas*, 63-82

Social and Political Conflict

Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800*, 78-117
Peter Thompson, “The Thief, the Householder, and the Commons: Languages of Class in Seventeenth-century Virginia,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 63 (2006), 253-280
MARCH 14 - FAMILY BONDS

Core reading: James Brooks, *Captives & Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*

Secondary reading:

Gender, Honor and Authority

Juliana Barr, “From Captives to Slaves: Commodifying Indian Women in the Borderlands,” *Journal of American History*, 92 (June, 2005), 19-46
Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away*, 207-26
Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, 77-101 [M, UGR]

Indian Slavery

William Brandon, *Quivira: Europeans in the Region of the Santa Fe Trail, 1540-1820*, 96-102, 146-56
Sondra Jones, “‘Redeeming’ the Indian: the Enslavement of Indian Children in New Mexico and Utah,” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 67 (1999), 220-241
Brett Rushforth, “‘A Little Flesh We Offer You’: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 60 (2003), 777-808

The Spanish and the Amerindians

James Axtell, *The Indians’ New South: Cultural Change in the Colonial Southwest*, 25-44
John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier 1513-1821*, 92-107 [M]
Donald Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, 1519-1821, 147-70
Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California*, 1769-1850, 65-122
Elizabeth John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 58-98 [WHS, E]
John L. Kessell, *Spain in the Southwest: A Narrative History of New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and California*, 223-51
Andrew L. Knaup, *The Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Conquest and Resistance in Seventeenth-century New Mexico*, 136-51
MARCH 21 - CONSPIRACY THEORY

Core reading: Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan*

Secondary reading:

African American Communities

Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City*, 1626-1863, 11-47
Lorena S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter’s Grove: The History of a Virginia Slave Community*, 81-108
Philip Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake & Lowcountry*, 441-97

The New York Conspiracy

Thelma Wills Foote, *Black and White Manhattan: The History of Racial Formation in Colonial New York City*, 159-86

Slave Revolts

David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen & Rebels: a Study of Master-slave Relations in Antigua, with Implications for Colonial British America*, 21-42
Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*, 308-26
IV. ATLANTIC ECONOMIES

MARCH 28 - TRADING SPACES

Core reading: Stephen J. Hornsby, British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America

Secondary reading:

Agriculture

Allan Kulikoff, From British Peasants to Colonial American Farmers, 125-63
Virginia DeJohn Anderson, Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America, 141-71
Lois Green Carr, et al., Robert Cole’s World: Agriculture & Society in Early Maryland, 55-75

Extractive Industries

Timothy Breen, Imagining the Past: East Hampton Histories, 143-205
Peter E. Pope, Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century, 349-406
Daniel Vickers, Farmers & Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1850, 143-203
Charles F. Carroll, The Timber Economy of Puritan New England, 75-97

Macroeconomic and Regional Approaches

Mark Egnal, New World Economies: The Growth of the Thirteen Colonies and Early Canada, 142-65
John J. McCusker and Russell Menard, The Economy of British America 1607-1789, 189-208
Douglas McManis, Colonial New England: A Historical Geography, 86-112
D. W. Meinig, The Shaping of America:… vol. 1: Atlantic America, 1492-1800, 160-190
Jacob M. Price, “The Imperial Economy,” in Wm. Roger Louis, ed., The Oxford History of the British Empire, 2.78-104 [M]

Port Towns

Jacob Price, “Summation: The American Panorama of Atlantic Port Cities,” in Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss, eds., Atlantic Port Cities ... 1650-1800, 262-76
Christine Leigh Heyrman, Commerce and Culture: The Maritime Communities of Colonial Massachusetts 1690-1750, 52-95
Thomas M. Doerflinger, A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise: Merchants and Economic Development in Revolutionary Philadelphia, 135-64
APRIL 11 - LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF STUFF


Secondary reading:

**Capitalism, Consumption and Economic Culture**


Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America*, 52-75 [M]


**Transatlantic Commerce and Communication**

Kenneth J. Banks, *Chasing Empire across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763*, 65-100 [M]

David Hancock, “‘A World of Business to Do’: William Freeman and the Foundations of England’s Commercial Empire,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 57 (2000), 3-34

Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York*, 170-214


**Imperial Administration**


V. POLITICS, PROVINCIAL AND IMPERIAL

APRIL 18 - ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

Core reading: Richard Beeman, *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America*

Secondary reading:

Overviews


Agrarian and Backcountry Rebellions


Eric Hinderaker and Peter C. Mancall, *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America*, 125-60


Brendan McConville, *These Daring Disturbers of the Public Peace: The Struggle for Property and Power in Early New Jersey*, 177-201

Deference


Barbara Clark Smith, “Beyond the Vote: the Limits of Deference in Colonial Politics,” *Early American Studies*, 3 (2005), 341-362

Alison Olson, “Political Humor, Deference, and the American Revolution,” *Early American Studies*, 3 (2005), 363-382


Political Cultures

John L. Brooke, *The Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and political culture in Worcester County Massachusetts, 1713-1861*, 97-128


Robert Dinkin, *Voting in Provincial America*, 50-71


APRIL 25 - FATHER FIGURE

Core reading: Brendan McConville, The King’s Three Faces: The Rise & Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776

Secondary reading:

Nationalism and Identity

Jack P. Greene, The Intellectual Construction of America, 95-129
Peter C. Messer, Stories of Independence: Identity, Ideology, and History in Eighteenth-century America, 17-44
Ed White, “Early American Nations as Imagined Communities,” American Quarterly, 56 (2004), 49-81

The People Out of Doors

Paul Gilje, Rioting in America, 12-34
Steven J. Stewart, “Skimmington in the Middle and New England Colonies,” in William Pencak, et al., Riot and Revelry in Early America, 41-86
David Waldstreicher, In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism..., 1-52
Alfred F. Young, “English Plebeian Culture and Eighteenth-Century American Radicalism,” in Margaret Jacob and James Jacob, eds., The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism, 185-212 [M]

Republican and Monarchical Discourses

Bernard Bailyn, The Origins of American Politics, 3-58
Richard L. Bushman, King and People in Provincial Massachusetts, 11-54
Paul Downes, Democracy, Revolution, and Monarchism in Early American Literature, 31-58 [M]
Isaac Kramnick, Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-century England and America, 163-99
Gordon Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution: How a Revolution Transformed a Monarchical Society into a Democratic One Unlike Any That Had Ever Existed, 57-92
Michael P. Zuckert, Natural Rights and the New Republicanism, 150-83
VI. TRANSFORMATIONS

MAY 2 - QU’EST-CE QUE C’EST, CE CANADIEN, CE NOUVEAU HOMME?

Core reading: Peter Moogk, *La Nouvelle France: The Making of French Canada—A Cultural History*

Secondary reading:

Overview

“Roundtable on Peter Moogk’s *La Nouvelle France,*” *French Colonial History,* 4 (2003), 1-30 [I]

Identity and Race


Leslie Choquette, “A colony of ‘Native French Catholics’? The Protestants of New France in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks, eds., *Memory and Identity: the Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora,* 255-66


Land and Society

Leslie Choquette, *Frenchmen into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada,* 279-307

Colin Coates, *The Metamorphoses of Land and Community in Early Quebec,* 32-54


Allan Greer, *Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes,* 1740-1840

Allan Greer, *The People of New France,* 27-42

Marcel Trudel, *The Beginnings of New France 1524-1663,* 246-67

Economy


Fernand Ouellet, *Economy, Class & Nation in Quebec: Interpretive Essays,* 5-39 [CLC]


Religion

Luca Codignola, “Competing Networks: Roman Catholic Ecclesiastics in French North America, 1610-58,” *Canadian Historical Review,* 80 (1999), 539-584

William J. Eccles, “The Role of the Church in New France,” in *idem, Essays on New France,* 26-37


Nicholas Jaenen, *The Role of the Church in New France,* 22-36

Patricia Simpson, *Marguerite Bourgeoys and Montreal,* 1640-1665, 153-85
MAY 9 - MODERN TIMES

Core reading: Jon Butler, *Becoming American: The Revolution before 1776*

Secondary reading:

**Anglicization**

Trevor Burnard, *Creole Gentlemen: The Maryland Elite 1691-1776*, 205-36  

**Modernization**

Joyce Appleby, “Modernization Theory and Anglo-American Social Theories,” in *idem*, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination*, 90-123  
Ronald Dufour, *Modernization in Colonial Massachusetts, 1630-1763*, 2-26

**Things Economic**

Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860*, 59-117  
Winifred B. Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts*, 24-55

**Things Material**

Kate Haulman, “Fashion and the Culture Wars of Revolutionary Philadelphia,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 62 (2005), 625-62  
David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues & Polite Letters in British America*, 55-98  

**Things Spiritual**

Frank Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America*, 127-58  
Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Women and Religion in Early America 1600-1850: The Puritan and Evangelical Traditions*, 75-103
A PROCLAMATION
Regarding Late Papers

Whereas it may come to pass that one or more individuals, whether through dilatoriness, dereliction, irresponsibility, or chutzpah, may seek respite and sucreas from escritorial demands through procrastination, delay, and downright evasion;

And whereas this unhappy happenstance contributes mightily to malfeasance on the part of parties of the second part (i.e., students, the instructed, you) and irascibility on the part of us (i.e., me);

Be it therefore known, understood, apprehended, and comprehended:

That all assignments must reach us on or by the exact hour announced in class, and that failure to comply with this wholesome and most generous regulation shall result in the assignment forfeiting one half letter grade for each day for which it is tardy (i.e., an “A” shall become an “AB”), “one day” being defined as a 24-hour period commencing at the announced hour on which the assignment is due; and that the aforementioned reduction in grade shall continue for each succeeding day of delay until either the assignment shall be remitted or its value shrunk unto nothingness. And let all acknowledge that the responsibility for our receiving papers deposited surreptitio (i.e., in my mailbox or under my door), whether timely or belated, resides with the aforementioned second-part parties (i.e., you again), hence onus for the miscarriage of such items falls upon the writer’s head (i.e., until I clutch your scribbles to my breast, I assume you have not turned them in, all protestations to the contrary notwithstanding).

Be it nevertheless affirmed:

That the greater part of justice residing in mercy, it may behoove us, acting entirely through our gracious prerogative, to award an extension in meritorious cases, such sufferance being granted only upon consultation with us, in which case a negotiated due date shall be decreed; it being perfectly well understood that failure to observe this new deadline shall result in the immediate and irreversible failure of the assignment (i.e., an “F”), its value being accounted as a null set and less than that of a vile mote. And be it further noted, that routine disruptions to routine (i.e., lack of sleep occasioned by pink badgers dancing on the ceiling) do not conduce to mercy, but that severe dislocations brought on by Acts of God (exceedingly traumatic events to the body and/or soul, such as having the earth swallow one up on the way to delivering the assignment) perpetrated either on oneself or on one’s loving kindred, do.

And we wish to trumpet forth:

That our purpose in declaiming said proclamation, is not essentially to terminate the wanton flouting of didactic intentions, but to encourage our beloved students to consult with us, and apprehend us of their difficulties aforesaid (i.e., talk to me, baby), so that the cruel axe of the executioner fall not upon their Grade Point Average and smite it with a vengeance. To which proclamation, we do affix our seal: