

BIBLIOGRAPHY for AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Mark C. Carnes and John A. Garraty, with Patrick Williams, *Mapping America's Past, Historical Atlas*, 1996.

Carl Deglar, *Out of Our Past, The Forces that Shaped Modern America*, 1959. This was my text when I was in 11th grade. I loved it then and I still find it well-written and interesting. I used it, or parts of it, for several years for my AP students. His ideas are powerful, and the quality of his writing is excellent.

Joseph Ellis, *The Cause: The American Revolution and its Discontents, 1773-1783*, 2021. Ellis's books are always well-written and fascinating. This is a comprehensive overview of the Revolution.

Joseph Ellis, *The Great Contradiction: The Tragic Side of the American Founding*, 2025. As the title implies, the book is an intriguing look at two failures of the Revolution – the failure to end slavery and the failure to protect Native American land. Terrific.

Walter Isaacson, *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*, 2025. I love this little book on the Declaration. Not as detailed, of course, as the book by Pauline Maier, such as *American Scripture*, but that's partly what makes it useful and delightful to read.

Robert Middelkauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*, 1982, revised 2005.

Nancy L. Rhodden and Ian K. Steele, editors, *The Human Tradition in the American Revolution*, 2000.

Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions; A Continental History, 1750-1804*, 2021. This is a comprehensive dive into aspects of the Revolution that are often overlooked: The West, the conflict between western settlers and elite land speculators, the Civil War that defined the American Revolution.

Barbara Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*, 1984. The book is about "one of the most compelling paradoxes of history: the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interests". One section is on England's policies under King George III relating to the American colonies.

Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: A History*, 2001. My recommendation for a good, short (170 page) overview of the Revolution.

Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 1992.

Colin Woodard, *American Nations, A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*, 2011. If you haven't read this, you should - but not for this course. It introduces the idea of cultural divisions in America and makes that the point that we have never been entirely united as a nation.

Other Texts: In addition, books by Nathaniel Philbrick, David McCullough, Rick Atkinson, and many others including lots of wonderful biographies, are all excellent, but tend to focus on narrower topics (i.e., The naval war, land battles, the Founders, particular documents, etc.) that would not work for the purposes of this course.

Articles:

Michael Kranish, *The Paradox of Philadelphia*. A good description of Jefferson and the writing of the Declaration, with special emphasis on slavery, Indian lands, and religion.
<https://washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2025/thomas-jefferson-philadelphia-declaration-independence-slavery/>

Heather Cox Richardson (January 14, 2026), Letters from an American (on Ratification Day and the Peace of the 1783). <https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/january-14-2026>

Heather Cox Richardson, Letters from an American (December 18, 2025). (on "These are the times..." and the desperation of the Cause).
<https://heathercoxrichardson.substack.com/p/december-18-2025>

Jeffrey Rosen, Opinion: *The Most Elusive Founder, Whose Pamphlet Fired up a Revolution*, (on Thomas Paine and *Common Sense*), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/interactive/2026/thomas-paine-common-sense-heretic/>