

## Syllabus

Reading US History, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic* by Joanne Freeman  
Coordinator: Michael Stevens. [michaelstevens50@gmail.com](mailto:michaelstevens50@gmail.com) 608-215-4887  
Google Meet, Mondays, 9:30 am-11:30 am. September 18 through October 30, 2023.

This course offers reading and discussion of some of the best writing on American history. We will read and discuss Joanne Freeman's *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*. This prize-winning book looks at the era between adoption of the Constitution and the Hamilton-Burr duel. Without political parties, American leaders practiced politics around the idea of honor. Combining political and cultural history, Freeman shows how gossip, newspapers, and dueling were important tools for politicians like Alexander Hamilton, Aaron Burr, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and other less known figures.

All sessions will be held online. Participants should obtain a copy of the book and come prepared to discuss the Introduction and the Prologue at our September 18 session.

Buy or borrow a copy Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*. Paperbacks and e-books are widely available in book stores and on Amazon. Used copies of hardcovers and paperbacks can frequently be found in used book stores.

### How to participate

To join the group contact me at [michaelstevens50@gmail.com](mailto:michaelstevens50@gmail.com)

Do readings before each class (1 chapter each week)—not so much to overwhelm anyone—but long enough to allow a close discussion of the topics. **Read and be ready to participate in a lively discussion of the Introduction and the Prologue prior to the September 18 class.**

I will e-mail a Google Meet notice every week with a link. Just click on the link and request to join the meeting. I will let you in. Desktop computer or laptop are preferred. No special software required, but if you are using a tablet or iPad, it's best to download the Google Meet app from the Apple Store or Google Play.

Sep. 18	Introduction.  Prologue, Walking on Untrodden Ground: The Challenges of National Politics
Sept. 25	Chapter 1, The Theater of National Politics
Oct. 2	Chapter 2, Slander, Poison, Whispers, and Fame: The Art of Political Gossip
Oct. 9	Chapter 3, The Art of Paper War
Oct. 16	Chapter 4, Dueling as Politics
Oct. 23	Chapter 5, An Honor Dispute of Grand Proportions: The Presidential Election of 1800
Oct. 30	Epilogue: Constructing American History  A Note on Method