



FOREVER
SCHOLARS™

THE REAL REVOLUTION; AMERICA 1775 – 1783

Professor Richard Bell

Starting September 18, 2023
7 PM ET

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

“The history of our Revolution will be one continued lie from one end to the other,” wrote John Adams in 1790. “The essence of the whole will be that Dr. Franklin’s electrical rod smote the Earth and out sprang General Washington.”

As Adams understood, the real story of the American Revolution is far more than the catalog of deeds done by a handful of famous men. Declaring independence on a piece of parchment on a summer’s day in Philadelphia in 1776 would have meant nothing had not tens of thousands of ordinary Americans been willing to support that cause and fight to make it a reality.

People at the time knew this, though too often today we forget. As Joseph Plumb Martin, a private in the Continental Army, later put it: “Great men get praise; little men, nothing.”

In this five-part course, University of Maryland historian Richard Bell explores the tumultuous eight years of war between 1775 and 1783. These weekly sessions will examine five of the extraordinary groups of people who played central roles in the war for independence: patriot soldiers, non-combatants on the home front, Native Americans, Black Americans, and white loyalists.

Session 1

September 18, 2023 - Monday at 7 p.m. ET

Hearts and Minds

More than 200,000 men and boys served with what became known as the Continental Army over the 8 years of war. Examine the experience of military life for ordinary enlisted soldiers and the wives and children who tagged along with them.

Session 2

September 25, 2023 - Monday at 7 p.m. ET

Homes and Hearths

How did the 1.8 million white non-combatants living in the colonies support the war effort? Bell looks at how the war transformed the economic lives of ordinary Americans as they responded to shortages and scarcity. He also analyzes how leaders on both sides tried to turn those civilians toward or against the cause of independence.

Session 3

October 2, 2023 - Monday at 7 p.m. ET

Tomahawks & Trade Goods

In some ways, the American Revolution was also an Indian war. Bell discusses the critical roles that Native Americans played in determining its outcome, the sides for which they fought, and how the war reshaped the balance of power between them and Europeans on this continent.

Session 4

October 9, 2023 - Monday at 7 p.m. ET

Race & Rebellion

Both the Continental and the British armies turned to free and enslaved people of color to bolster their troops and provide logistical support. Bell examines how they responded and the ways in which we can understand the American Revolution as a war for racial freedom.

Session 5

October 16, 2023 - Monday at 7 p.m. ET

Fear & Loathing

How does the story of the American Revolution change when told from the perspective of the loyalists? Learn why some ordinary white Americans chose to retain allegiance to Britain and how that decision shaped their experience of the Revolution—and changed their lives once the patriots won the war.

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