

**The Early Republic**  
HIS 264

Satisfies: DIV, USA [DEC K, Skill 4]

Thematic Categories:  
Arts, Ideas & Culture; Empires, Violence & Global Connections;  
Health, Science & Environmental Change

Tu/Th 9:30am-10:50am

Professor Donna Rilling

This course introduces you to critical developments in the history of the United States from the American Revolution to approximately 1848. It looks at the principles on which the nation was based, how those ideals evolved over the subsequent decades, and how a variety of groups and individuals contributed to the shape that the new nation took. Our endpoint, 1848, marks the moment that many—people living then and historians looking back in time—deemed the nation mature. No longer was it a “new” or “young” or an “early” republic, on the one hand full of the possibilities of sweeping change, and on the other hand fraught with anxieties that change would go too far. The young nation had been anxious about its very survival as a republic: could a nation with a republican form of government beat the track record of the few short-lived republics known to history? By 1848, the mature nation, full of a sense of its rising importance among western countries, nonetheless wondered whether it would fracture over the issue of slavery. By the later period, the United States had been both tested and strained and, many contemporary Americans then believed, had developed myriad social, economic and political problems characteristic of a mature nation.