

**HIS 288**  
**Wealth and Inequality in Early America**

Satisfies: DIV, SBS, USA

Thematic Categories: "Empires, Violence & Global Connections,"  
"Law, Politics & Social Justice"

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

Professor Donna Rilling

Focuses on Americans as producers, sellers and consumers from the earliest years of European colonization through the mid 1800s. Working thematically and chronologically, we will examine such topics as: the American colonies in the context of global trade; the Atlantic slave trade; early American colonies, the roles they played for imperial powers, and the connections among the backgrounds, goals, values, and local conditions; trade between native Americans and European Americans and the ways in which trade affected both societies; Americans as consumers; the financial system and the counterfeit financial system; the emergence of a middle-class in the late-18th and 19th centuries; early industrialization; slave economies; Americans as workers; and risk, success, and failure in an increasingly industrial nation and the ramifications of failure for American identity and democracy.