GROUP ROLE-PLAYING ASSIGNMENT –
IMAGINING A TRANSATLANTIC STAMP ACT CONGRESS

In this group project, the class will recreate, in spirit if not in form, the debates that colonial political elites and British politicians had during the period, 1764-1766. We will imagine that in late 1766, the British government was able to convene a meeting of the Privy Council with representatives from both Britain (members of Parliament, British merchants, etc.) and from the colonies (leaders and commentators from many of the colonies). The Privy Council will be soliciting opinions about why the colonists opposed the Quartering Act and Stamp Act, and why they continue to oppose the Declaratory Act. They will make recommendations about future revenue legislation.

The focus of our debate will be the the documents in the Jack Greene reader, Colonies to Nation – this chapter will posted on the course website. (For copyright reasons I will password protect it – the password is: history), as well as other readings (Americanization of Benjamin Franklin, A People’s Army) and class lectures and discussions.

The class will be divided into five groups:

- Groups 1 and 2 will represent colonial interests.
- Groups 3 and 4 will represent metropolitan (British) interests.
- Group 5 is His Majesty’s Privy Council, that will conduct the questioning of all groups.
- The professor will serve as the presiding royal judge and will final say in resolving all disputes regarding proper evidence, and also tell speakers when time is up.

Format
The debate will take up the entire class session on Tues. Feb. 10. The parties will not argue directly with one another, but present their arguments in turn.

Opening. Group 1 makes its opening remarks (c. 5 minutes) as to why they oppose the Quartering Act, Stamp Act, and Declaratory Act.

Opening. Group 2 makes its opening remarks (c.5 minutes) as to why they oppose the Quartering Act, Stamp Act, and Declaratory Act.

Opening. Group 3 makes its opening remarks (c.5 minutes) as to why they support the Quartering Act, Stamp Act, and Declaratory Act.

Opening. Group 4 makes its opening remarks (c.5 minutes) as to why they support the Quartering Act, Stamp Act, and Declaratory Act.
Cross-examination. Council (Group 5) asks Group 1 any questions about their remarks. Members of Group 1 must respond to these questions. (c.10 minutes)

Cross-examination. Council (Group 5) asks Group 2 any questions about their remarks. Members of Group 2 must respond to these questions. (c.10 minutes)

Cross-examination. Council (Group 5) asks Group 3 any questions about their remarks. Members of Group 2 must respond to these questions. (c.10 minutes)

Cross-examination. Council (Group 5) asks Group 4 any questions about their remarks. Members of Group 2 must respond to these questions. (c.10 minutes)

Rebuttal. In remaining time, Group 3 and 4 will be given opportunity to challenge statements made by Group 1 and 2. They cannot introduce new information, but can challenge the validity of anything Groups 1 and 2 introduce. The same will hold true for groups 1 and 2. This part of the discussion will be a little more free-form.

Judgment. In the final five minutes, the judge will ask the Privy Council which arguments they found persuasive and he will render his final judgment.

Scope
Each member of Groups 1-4 should adopt the persona of a real person from the 1760s. Likely, group members will choose to adopt the persona of one of the authors from the Greene collection. (Benjamin Franklin, Daniel Delany, etc.) However, you can get creative and use the Greene collection and the background in the other readings to imagine yourself as a Massachusetts colonist from A People’s Army, or a member of the mobs that rioted against the Stamp Act, or a British merchant trading with the colonies, or a colonial farmer whose trade is being hurt by the laws. Anything is fair game.

Other than the basic requirement of arguing for or against the Quartering Act, Stamp Act, and Declaratory Act, groups 1-4 can elaborate their arguments in any way they like. Groups can reference the arguments of any documents that support the position they want to argue.

Group 5 must anticipate what both sides might argue and prepare questions to ask each group. While you may asks groups arguing the same side similar questions, there must be at least one unique question for each group.

The only limitation on what you can reference is this...we are going to assume it is December 1766 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

So, all groups can reference any books we have so far in class, but can’t refer to events that happen after 1766.

Also, all groups can refer to anything outside of class, as long as it was written before 1766. This means you cannot refer to anyone who lived after 1766 or books written after 1766 (Wealth of Nations, the Communist Manifesto, Atlas Shrugged, etc.). If you
Responsibilities/Grading

Everyone in your group must speak at least once.

For groups 1-4, each member should prepare a “talking points memo” — a short paragraph (in his/her own words) outlining the group’s argument and the evidence they are using. This needs to be typed and printed out and handed in at the conclusion of your group’s presentation day.

Members of group 5, their talking points memo should have a typed list of the formal questions they plan to ask each group (although the group can also ask impromptu, informal questions on the spot, too). This should be handed in at the end of the second day.

Your grade will be based of both the quality of your group’s presentation as well as your individual performance.

GOOD LUCK!
GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

Group 1
Anderson, Nathan
Heemsbergen, Gerrit
Joslin, Hannah
Mason, Brandon
Miller, Michael
Smith, Emma

Group 2
Appel, Pieter
Ellis, Chad
Hardy, Wesley
Manthe, Elise
Sheahan, Jacob
Strachan, Jeremy

Group 3
Bastin, Curt
Dettmann, Travis
Kenne, Erinn
Scholtes, D.J.
Vance, Abby

Group 4
Brodie, Dan
Christensen, Cameron
Korovilas, Pantalis
Nüichel, Justin
Stoeker, Rebecca

Group 5
Buesing, Tricia
Cox, David
Novak, Colin
Sandrock, Nathan
Swank, Alex