

HIS 710
Atlantic World Colloquium
Fall 2007

W 3:30-6:20 pm
Moore HRA 3207

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Office hours: Wednesdays 1-3 pm and by appointment (Moore HRA 2106)

Synopsis

This course introduces students to the variety of approaches and themes that comprise one of the newest and fastest-growing fields in our discipline. The Atlantic World provides a useful conceptual and methodological framework in which to analyze the development of European empires, the creation of American colonial societies, and the emergence of trans-imperial networks in the early modern period (roughly 1400-1800) and beyond. We will read a selection of major works which have defined the field, identify different perspectives and approaches, and trace the development of the historiography. We will also consider the challenges involved in comparative, cross-cultural historical research, and the limits of an Atlantic approach.

Required Books (Please make sure you have the right edition. All are on reserve at the library.)

Calloway, Colin G. *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America.*

The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.

Canny, Nicholas, & Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800.*

Princeton University Press, 1987.

Cañizares-Esguerra, Jorge, & Eric R. Seeman, eds., *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000.*

Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2007.

Crosby, Alfred. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492.* 30th anniversary edition. Praeger, 2003.

Daniels, Christine, & Michael V. Kennedy, eds., *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the New World, 1500-1820.* Routledge, 2002.

Davis, David Brion. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World.* Oxford University Press, 2006.

Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo. *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links.* Ian Randle, 2006.

James, C. L. R. *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution.*

Vintage Books, 1989.

Kurlansky, Mark. *Cod: The Biography of the Fish That Changed the World.* Penguin, 1997.

Langley, Lester. *The Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1750-1850.* Yale University Press, 1996.

Meinig, Donald. *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History. Volume I. Atlantic America.* Yale University Press, 1986.

Parry, J. H. *The Age of Reconnaissance: Discovery, Exploration, and Settlement, 1450-1650.*

Various editions.

Sensback, Jon. *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World.* Harvard University Press, 2006.

Sobel, Dava. *Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of his Time.* Penguin: 1996.

Recommended: Egerton, Douglas, et al. *The Atlantic World.* Harlan Davidson, 2007.

Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Assignments***Unit 1: The Rise of the Atlantic World***

Wednesday, August 22: Articles on e-reserves

Wednesday, August 29: Parry, *The Age of Reconnaissance*

Wednesday, September 5: Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*

Wednesday, September 12: Calloway, *New Worlds for All*

Wednesday, September 19: Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*

Assignment: Draft abstract/proposal due

Unit 2: Empires and the People in Them

Wednesday, September 26: Meinig, *The Shaping of America, Vol. I: Atlantic America*

Assignment: Unit 1 essay due

Wednesday, October 3: Daniels and Kennedy, eds., *Negotiated Empires*

Wednesday, October 10: Canny and Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World*

Assignment: Rewritten abstract/ proposal and draft bibliography due

Wednesday, October 17: Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas*

Wednesday, October 24: James, *The Black Jacobins*

Assignment: Annotated bibliography due

Unit 3: The Circulation of Commodities, People, and Ideas

Wednesday, October 31: Kurlansky, *Cod*

Assignment: Unit 2 essay due

Wednesday, November 5: Sensback, *Rebecca's Revival*

Assignment: Draft paper due

Wednesday, November 14: Sobel, *Longitude*

Wednesday, November 21: THANKSGIVING BREAK; NO CLASS

Wednesday, November 28: Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution*

Wednesday, December 5: Cañizares-Esguerra & Seaman, eds., *The Atlantic in Global History*

Monday, December 10: Final paper and Unit 3 essay due

Course Goals and Objectives

By the end of the course students should have developed significant skill in:

- recognizing a variety of interpretive approaches to Atlantic history
- analyzing historical monographs for their conceptual framework and methodological approach
- evaluating the different ways that historians use primary sources
- tracing trends and developments in the historiography
- developing their own analytic abilities, both written and oral

Requirements

Graduate work requires active, enthusiastic participation at all levels, deep understanding of the material, engagement with classmates, and careful, timely completion of assignments. As a graduate student you should make the most of every opportunity to develop your analytic abilities and to push beyond the limits of your current knowledge.

All written work should follow rigorous standards of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and style. Clear writing showcases clear thinking. Carefully edit and proofread everything you write. Graduate students should own, and consult often, the latest editions of:

Wayne C. Booth, et al. *The Craft of Research*. University of Chicago Press.
Kate L. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. U. C. P.
Joseph M. Williams, *Style. Toward Clarity and Grace*. U. C. P.

For all assignments, bring a hard copy (printout) to class, and also deposit an identical copy in the electronic dropbox of the course Blackboard site. See class schedule for due dates.

Written and oral discussion (approximately 30% of final grade)

Goal: To develop the skill of informed, intelligent discussion, both written and oral.

Class presentations: Each week one or two students will give a brief presentation situating the assigned reading and its author in a wider historiographic context, and then lead our discussion of the material. They will post questions and ideas on the Discussion Board of the course Blackboard site by Friday or Saturday. Discussion leaders will meet with the professor the week before (Wednesday at 2:30 pm unless otherwise agreed).

Blackboard postings: Students will begin to discuss the weekly readings on the Blackboard Discussion Board. Initial postings are due by 10 pm Monday; responses can be posted through 10 pm Tuesday. At a minimum, you must participate actively in the Blackboard forum at least ten weeks during the semester and three weeks for each unit. Carefully read your fellow students' postings and come to class prepared to engage in the discussion regardless of whether you have posted.

Class participation: Attendance; active engagement with the material; and pointed, thoughtful, courteous responses to your fellow students' ideas and analysis are expected.

Short writing assignments (approximately 30% of grade)

Goal: To develop proficiency in critical, analytic, and synthetic writing.

Unit essays: Write a five to seven page analysis and comparison of the readings for two of the course units, drawing on and developing some of the themes we have addressed in our discussions, and highlighting similarities and differences between the works. You must write an essay for Unit 1. It is your choice whether your second essay is for Unit 2 or Unit 3. Plan wisely.

Book reviews: Each week one or two students will read an additional book which complements the assigned reading, and write a two to three page review for the class. Bring enough copies of the review to distribute in class (two for the professor), and a copy of the book to pass around.

Final paper (approximately 40% of grade)

Goal: To develop students' abilities to critically analyze a corpus of historiography.

Researching, writing, and presenting papers is one of the most important tasks in our profession. In this course you are required to write a substantial, thoughtful analysis (15-20 pages) of the historiography of an appropriate topic, situating the material in relation to relevant Atlantic literature. The project will include a draft and revised proposal/abstract, annotated bibliography, draft paper, class presentation, and final paper.

Your paper should carefully consider the relevance of an Atlantic perspective for your chosen topic. The topic should be one with which you already have some familiarity, and which lends itself well to the broad theme of the course, which focuses on the early modern Atlantic world. The style and content of individual papers will vary depending on the specific project and the degree to which there is an existing Atlantic literature on the topic.

The final paper should address the following questions and issues: What are the major works and broad trends in the existing historiography? To what extent has this historiography been informed by an Atlantic perspective? How does/would an Atlantic-based approach open up different perspectives and new approaches to the topic? How does an Atlantic perspective change or influence your understanding of the material related to your research topic? What are the limits of an Atlantic approach? How might questions be framed differently to open future fruitful research?

The purpose is not to produce a blind celebration of an Atlantic approach. Rather, students are expected to bring a critical perspective to a corpus of historiography, to engage analytically with the topic, and to demonstrate dexterity in navigating some of the major thematic, historiographic, and methodological issues in the field of Atlantic history.

You should meet individually with the professor at least three times to discuss your ideas, progress, and any difficulties you are having. Logical times to do this are while you are fine-tuning the draft proposal, while you are working on the annotated bibliography, and after you receive comments on the draft paper. Feel free to request additional meetings. It is your responsibility to schedule meetings in a timely fashion. If you are having difficulty choosing a suitable topic, schedule a meeting as soon as possible.