

## **HIS 710: Atlantic World Colloquium Fall 2011**

Tuesday 3:30-6:20 pm  
Room: Moore HRA 3209

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Office hours: Thursdays 10-12 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.

### **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, methodological approach, and use of sources
- tracing trends and developments in the historiography
- developing their own analytic abilities, both written and oral

### **Required Books** (Please make sure you have the right edition.)

- Bailyn, Bernard. *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours*. Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Benjamin, Thomas. *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians, and Their Shared History, 1400-1900*. Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Crosby, Alfred. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition. Praeger, 2003.
- Hancock, David. *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Organization of the Atlantic Market, 1640-1815*. Yale University Press, 2009.
- Klooster, Wim. *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*. New York University Press, 2009.
- Meinig, Donald. *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History. Volume I. Atlantic America*. Yale University Press, 1986.
- Sensback, Jon. *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World*. Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*. Second Edition. Cambridge University Press, 1998.

**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 edition of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (University of Chicago Press).

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.

***Written and oral discussion*** (approximately 40% of final grade)

*Class presentations:* Each week one or two students will give a brief presentation situating the assigned reading and its author in context, and frame some questions to lead our class discussion. Discussion leaders will meet with the professor the week before. It is your responsibility to schedule these meetings in a timely manner and to come to them fully prepared. Each student will also give a short presentation of her/his own develop

*Class participation:* Attendance; active engagement with the material; and pointed, courteous responses to your fellow students' ideas and analysis are expected. Cultivate the art of being a thoughtful listener as well as an articulate speaker.

***Short writing assignments*** (approximately 60% of grade)

*Unit essays:* For Units 1 and 2 you will write a seven to ten page analysis and comparison of the readings, drawing on and developing some of the themes we have addressed in our discussions, and critically appraising similarities in and differences between the works. The essays are due in class the week after we finish the unit.

For Unit 3 you will apply the cumulative course material to your own developing work and interests, supplemented by some additional, individualized readings. Here you have a choice: you may focus on either research or teaching. Each student will meet at least twice with the professor to discuss the appropriate contours of this assignment. The last essay is due on Friday, December 9.

*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. You will also give a brief oral presentation which summarizes the work and highlights its relevance. Each student will review two books in the course of the semester.

*Schedule of Classes and Readings***Unit 1: Defining the Atlantic World**

August 23: Introduction

August 30: Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities" (*American Historical Review* 111:3 June 2006); W. Jeffrey Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500-1800" (*AHR* 111:1, February 2008: 19-47); David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History" (handout).

September 6: Nicholas Canny, "Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America" (*Journal of American History* December 1999); Douglas Egerton, "Rethinking Atlantic Historiography in a Postcolonial Era" (PDF); Peter A. Coclanis, "Atlantic World or Atlantic/World" (*The William and Mary Quarterly* 63:4 October 2006).

September 13: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*, Parts 1 and 2

September 20: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*, Part 3

September 27: Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours*

**Note: All journal articles are accessible via the UNCG library databases.**

**\*\*\* Unit 1 essay due on Tuesday, October 4 \*\*\***

**Unit 2: Analyzing the Atlantic World**

October 4: Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*

October 11: **Fall break; no class**

October 18: Thornton, *Africa and Africans*

October 25: Meinig, *The Shaping of America* (selections)

November 1: Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*

November 8: Sensback, *Rebecca's Revival*

November 15: Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*

**\*\*\* Unit 2 essay due on Tuesday, November 22 \*\*\***

**Unit 3: Researching and Teaching the Atlantic World**

November 22: Individual readings and presentations

November 29: Individual readings and presentations

**\*\*\* Unit 3 essay due on Friday, December 9 \*\*\***