

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

Tuesday 6:30-9:20pm

Dr. Julia Gaffield

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Room: MHRA 3207

Office hours: Monday 2-4pm Room 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

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.

Brown, Vincent. *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery*. Harvard University Press, 2007.

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.

Sensbach, 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.

Viotti da Costa, Emilia. *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

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.

Written and Oral Discussion (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.

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.

Primary Source Assignments: Twice during the semester, each student will be required to track down a primary source that one of the authors uses (many are available online or through ILL) and give a short presentation about how the author uses the source. This can include an analysis of the type of source, the context in which the source was produced, etc.

Short writing Assignments (30% 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.

Historiographical Essay (30% of grade)

Each student is required to submit a 20-25pg historiographical essay on any topic related to Atlantic World History. For this assignment you will be required to select five books on your selected topic and place them in conversation about the topic by offering an analysis of their central arguments, theoretical frameworks, sources, strengths, weakness and contributions to the field. This assignment may provide an opportunity to begin some of the work of crafting the historiographical material that will be included in your thesis, however all topics must be approved by Professor Gaffield.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

Unit 1: Defining the Atlantic World

August 20: Introduction

August 27: Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities"
American Historical Review, (2006) 111:3.

W. Jeffrey Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine

Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500-1800” *American Historical Review*, (2008) 111(1): 19-47.

David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History.”

Note: All journal articles are available on Blackboard.

September 3: Labor Day; no class

September 10: Nicholas Canny, “Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America” *Journal of American History* (1999)

Douglas Egerton, “Rethinking Atlantic Historiography in a Postcolonial Era” (PDF)

Peter A. Coclanis, “Atlantic World or Atlantic/World” *The William and Mary Quarterly* (2006) 63(4).

September 18: Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concepts and Contours*

***** Unit 1 essay due on Monday, September 24 *****

September 24: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*

Unit 2: Analyzing the Atlantic World

October 1: Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory*

October 8: Fall break; no class

October 15: Thornton, *Africa and Africans*

October 22: Brown, *Reaper’s Garden*

October 29: Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*

November 5: Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival*

***** Unit 2 essay due on Monday, November 12 *****

November 12: Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*

Unit 3: Researching the Atlantic World

November 19: Independent Research Day, Professor Gaffield will be available by appointment.

November 26: Independent Research Day, Professor Gaffield will be available by appointment

December 3: **Historiographical Essays due and discussion of projects.**