

HIS 710: Atlantic World Colloquium Fall 2013

Thursdays 6:30-9:20 pm
Room: FOUS 111

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Office hours: Thursdays 2-4 pm and by appointment (Moore HRA 2105)

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

- 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*. 30th anniversary edition. Praeger, 2003. (Make sure you have the correct edition.)
- 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.
- Landers, Jane. *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*. Harvard University Press, 2010.
- Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Beacon Press, 2000.
- Pressly, Paul. *On the Rim of the Caribbean: Colonial Georgia and the British Atlantic World*. University of Georgia Press, 2012.
- 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 30% of final grade)

Class presentations: Each week during Unit 2 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.

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 40% of final grade)

Unit essays: For each unit you will write a five to seven 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.

Book reviews: Each week during Unit 2 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.

Final paper (approximately 30% of final grade)

This assignment allows 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. We will discuss this in more detail during the first weeks of the course.

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

August 22: Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *American Historical Review* 111:3 (June 2006): 741-57; Alan Karras, "The Atlantic World as a Unit of Study," in Alan L. Karras and J. R. McNeill, eds., *Atlantic American Societies: From Columbus through Abolition, 1492-1888* (Routledge, 1992): 1-12 (handout).

August 29: David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in David Armitage, ed., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (London: Palgrave, 2002): 11-26 (handout); Lara Putnam, "To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History*, 39:3 (spring 2006): 615-30, 951; Peter A. Coclanis, "Atlantic World or Atlantic/World," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63:4 (October 2006): 725-42.

September 5: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*, Part 1; W. Jeffrey Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500-1800," *American Historical Review* 111:1 (February 2008): 19-47; Donald Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective*. Vol. 1 (Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 55-76, 258-67 (handout); Jerry H. Bentley, "Sea and Ocean Basins as Frameworks of Historical Analysis," *The Geographical Review* 89:2 (April 1999): 215-24.

September 12: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*, Part 2; Nicholas Canny, "Writing Atlantic History: or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America," *Journal of American History* 86:3 (December 1999): 1093-1114; Ian K. Steele, "Exploding Colonial American History: Amerindian, Atlantic, and Global Perspectives," *Reviews in American History* 26:1 (March 1998): 70-95; James Sidbury and Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, "Mapping Ethnogenesis in the Early Modern Atlantic," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68:2 (April 2011): 181-208.

September 19: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*, Part 3; Jeremy Adelman, "An Age of Imperial Revolutions," *American Historical Review* 113:2 (April 2008): 319-40; Douglas Egerton, "Rethinking Atlantic Historiography in a Postcolonial Era: The Civil War in a Global Perspective," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1:1 (March 2011): 79-95.

Unit 2: Analyzing the Atlantic World

September 26: Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*; **Unit 1 essay due.**

October 3: Thornton, *Africa and Africans*

October 10: Lindebaugh and Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra*

October 24: Sensback, *Rebecca's Revival*

October 31: Hancock, *Oceans of Wine*

November 7: Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*

November 14: Landers, *Atlantic Creoles*

November 21: Summation; **Unit 2 essay due.**

Final paper due on Wednesday, December 4.