Columbus’s arrival in the Caribbean in October 1492 was one of the most consequential blunders in human history—and it has been interpreted in many different ways over the past 500 years. In this course we will read a range of primary sources that document the impact of Europeans’ conquest, settlement, and transformation of the region, with particular attention to the usefulness, limitations, and changing interpretations of the sources that are available to us. Each student will then identify and delve into a selection of primary sources related to a specific theme in early Caribbean history. The major project is to write an original research paper based on a careful reading and critical analysis of these sources, with reference to how different historians have interpreted the material.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES
In this course students will develop their abilities to:

• pose appropriate research questions around a suitable topic in early Caribbean history
• locate and analyze relevant primary and secondary sources
• construct a coherent, persuasive argument backed up by appropriate evidence
• write clear, compelling academic prose
• speak articulately about sources, research, and historical interpretation

READINGS
The following book is required for this course:

It can be purchased at the UNCG bookstore or from online sellers. Throughout Unit 1 there will be weekly handouts of primary and secondary sources, which will also be posted to Canvas. In Units 2 and 3 students will work with material that is appropriate to their individual research projects, drawing heavily on library resources. Always bring the week’s handouts and Rampolla to class.
ASSIGNMENTS
The major project for this class is production of an original research paper, 15-20 pages, which closely analyzes an appropriate selection of primary sources; situates this material in historical context; and engages with relevant historiography. Conceptualizing, researching, writing, and reworking an original research paper can seem overwhelming, but it is also deeply satisfying—and it’s what we historians do!

In Unit 1 we will discuss major themes in early Caribbean history; critically examine the types of sources available, and discuss how historians have interpreted them. Students will review and hone research and writing skills with short weekly assignments.

You will build the paper over the course of Unit 2, in a series of carefully scaffolded assignments. Unit 3 is devoted to revising the draft paper into a final, polished version.

To pass this course, you must successfully complete all the major assignments on schedule, including submitting a complete draft and writing a final paper that shows significant reworking of the draft, based on the professor’s comments. If you complete each step on time, and follow the specifications, you should do well in this course. However, it will be very difficult to catch up if you miss more than one or two classes, or if you get behind in the assignments: your grade will suffer, and you may fail the course.

Paper copies of all written assignments are due at the beginning of class (2 pm), with an identical electronic copy uploaded to Canvas. The deadline for uploading this electronic copy is 6 pm, so posting need not make you late to class.

Grading
Short writing assignments: 15%
Scaffolded assignments: 15%
Draft research paper: 20%
Final research paper: 35%
Attendance, discussion, and presentations: 15%

Grading Scale:
A: 93-100, A-: 90-92 B+: 87-89; B: 83-86, B-: 80-82

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute students’ acceptance of UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy. You will find a copy of the full policy at: http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense which can result in failing the class or expulsion from the university. Know the rules. When in doubt, ask.
ATTENDANCE AND CLASS ETIQUETTE
Students are expected to attend and be attentive in class; to have read and thought about the material; and to participate actively in discussions. You are allowed two absences in this course; for every class you miss thereafter your overall participation grade will be lowered by five points.

A classroom is a communal space where we gather to pursue a common goal. Get to know your fellow students! Please do not use cell phones or other electronic devices except as necessary for class work; do not bring food to class unless you have enough to share with everyone. You may bring an individual drink. Repeatedly arriving late, leaving early, leaving the room during class, and sleeping (or appearing to sleep) are disrespectful and disruptive—they will be counted as absences unless you have discussed extenuating circumstances with the professor.

COMMUNICATION AND MEETINGS
We will communicate regularly in this course via Canvas and our UNCG e-mail accounts. Check both regularly. Feel free to e-mail me with any questions or concerns (lmrupert@uncg.edu). You should expect to hear back within 24 hours, unless: 1) it is the weekend; 2) you receive an automatic “out of office” reply. It is your responsibility to make sure that the communication is successful and that all material gets to me on time.

Individual meetings are an important part of this course. It is your responsibility to attend meetings you have scheduled, and to be punctual and prepared. If you must cancel due to illness or an emergency please contact me immediately, and reschedule promptly. Five points will be deducted from your overall participation grade each time you miss a scheduled meeting, come unprepared, or arrive more than 10 minutes late.

USEFUL RESOURCES
History Department (his.uncg.edu/ and www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/): Keep up with departmental activities and fellow history majors!

Dean of Students (sa.uncg.edu/dean/support/): Supports and advocates for students in crisis, including those with family emergencies, extended illness, trauma, etc.

Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (ods.uncg.edu): Students who have documented disabilities that require accommodation should register with OARS and bring in the required paperwork during the first week of class. No accommodations can be made without this paperwork.

Information Technology Services (its.uncg.edu): Your source for all tech problems, including computer malfunctions, issues with Canvas, etc. The professor cannot help you with these!

University Writing Center (writingcenter.uncg.edu): Provides help with paper structure, argument, grammar, style, etc.

University Speaking Center (speakingcenter.uncg.edu): Provides help for all oral presentations, to both individuals and groups.
COURSE OVERVIEW
You will receive a detailed schedule at the beginning of each unit.

Unit I: Getting Started (Weeks 1-5: August 21-September 18)
In this unit you will:
• explore major themes in early Caribbean history and how historians have interpreted them
• review and practice the major skills needed for writing an original research paper
• identify a topic and appropriate primary source(s) on which to base a research paper
We will have weekly class meetings throughout this unit, with readings in primary documents and secondary sources.

Weekly writing assignments (2-4 pages; 700-1400 words) will help students develop analysis and writing skills. Rampolla will serve as a reference for research and writing.

Unit II: Getting it Down (Weeks 6-11: September 23-October 30)
In this unit you will:
• closely analyze the primary source(s) selected
• develop one or more suitable research questions related to the material
• identify and read an appropriate corpus of secondary literature related to the paper topic, including both narrative and historical interpretation (historiography)
• produce a 12-15 page draft research paper, contextualizing the selected primary source(s) in a wider narrative and beginning to identify larger historiographic (“so-what”) questions
There will be a combination of regular class sessions; individual and small group meetings with the professor; and individualized research time. Reading assignments will focus on material that is specific to each person’s project.

Weekly scaffolded assignments will include deep analysis of the primary document(s) selected; paper abstract (draft and revisions); annotated bibliography; development of an appropriate narrative based on relevant secondary material; and the draft research paper.

***** Draft research paper due on Monday, November 4 *****

Unit III: Fixing it Up (Weeks 12-16: November 4-December 4)
The primary task for this unit is to produce the final research paper 15-20 pages), which will be a substantial rewrite of the draft paper. It should address all the professor’s comments on the draft and incorporate a balance of the following three elements:
• in-depth, original analysis of primary material
• historical narrative to provide full context
• engagement with one or more relevant historiographic issues
There will be a combination of regular class sessions, individual and small group meetings with the professor, and individualized research time.

***** Final, revised paper due by Friday, December 5 *****