

## HIS 715: Empires and Colonies of the Atlantic World (and Beyond) Fall 2019



Mondays 4:00-6:50 pm

School of Education #108

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**Office hours:** Mondays 11-12, Wednesdays 3:30-4:30, and by appointment

This course surveys a range of approaches and themes related to the rise and consolidation of European overseas empires in the early modern period. We will discuss major trends in the historiography, with particular attention to changing perspectives on the relationship between, and relative importance of, imperial structures, trans-imperial processes, and the agency of different colonial groups and individuals.

### Student Learning Outcomes

In this course students will develop significant skills in:

- analyzing historical monographs for their conceptual framework, methodological approach, use of sources, and historiographic perspective
- identifying different approaches to the study of European overseas empires
- writing academic prose that is clear, pointed, and analytically rigorous
- engaging in persuasive, thoughtful, and courteous discussion with their academic peers

### Required Books

*All of these titles can be purchased from the UNCG bookstore or (often less expensively) via online sellers. They are also on one-day reserve at Jackson Library. Many are available as ebooks. You will need to bring a copy to class that has page numbers.*

Benton, Lauren. *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Crosby, Alfred. *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

Daniels, Christine and Michael V. Kennedy, eds. *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*. (Routledge, 2002).

Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford University Press: 2008)

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (University of Chicago Press, 1991).

Herzog, Tamar. *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* (Harvard University Press, 2015).

Kruger, Colleen E. *Making Money: Life, Death, and Early Modern Trade on Africa's Guinea Coast* (Ohio University Press, 2017)

Parry, J. H. *The Establishment of the European Hegemony, 1415-1715* (various editions, [1961]).

Pagden, Anthony. *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France* (Yale University Press, 1995).

Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (UNC Press, 2011).

White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

Wolf, Eric. *Europe and the People Without History* (University of California Press, 1982).

## **Requirements**

Graduate work requires, at a minimum, careful reading and deep understanding of assigned material; active, enthusiastic participation at all levels; pointed but courteous engagement with your classmates' ideas; timely and rigorous completion of assignments; careful proofreading and copy editing of all written work. 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.

This is a historiography course. At the graduate level, you are reading primarily not for narrative, but rather for argument, approach, and sources. You should be able to identify the author's main argument; how s/he develops it; what kinds of sources s/he brings to bear; and how all this compares to other works we have read. Come to class prepared to raise several points and/or questions for discussion, with reference to specific page numbers.

All written work should follow rigorous standards of structure, 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).

All papers should be written in standard format (Times New Roman 12" type or similar, double spaced, with one-inch margins), with a relevant title, a clear argument, and a brief introduction and conclusion that frame your main point. Please number your pages. All written assignments are due in hard copy, with an identical upload to the course Canvas site.

### **Oral Assignments** (30% of final grade)

*Class presentation:* Each week one student will briefly introduce our assigned reading and author, providing some helpful background and context for understanding the work.

*Outside book review:* Each student will read one additional book and give a brief presentation which summarizes the work and positions it vis-à-vis relevant course themes and relevant common readings. You will also write a review for the class. (See below.)

*Class participation:* Attendance at all classes is required except in case of illness or emergency. Come prepared to ask questions, to raise several key points, and to engage thoughtfully with your fellow students' ideas. Cultivate the art of being both a thoughtful listener and an articulate speaker.

### **Written Assignments** (70% of final grade)

- Three five- to seven-page essays analyzing and comparing the unit readings, moving beyond the themes we have addressed in our discussions, and critically appraising similarities and differences in their approaches. ***Due by 3 pm on Wednesday, October 2; Wednesday, November 6; and Wednesday, December 4.***
- One final paper deepening your analysis around a major theme or approach to empire, drawing on readings from all three units. ***Due by Monday, December 9.***
- A two to three-page book review of your outside reading, with copies for the entire class. ***Due in class on the day you present the book.***

We will discuss the criteria for these assignments early in the semester.

**Schedule**

***Unit 1: Processes in European Overseas Expansion***

*Monday, August 26:* Felipe Fernández-Armesto, “Empires in their Global Context;” Nicholas Canny, “Atlantic History and Global History” (PDFs posted in Canvas Files)

*Monday, September 2* (no class: Labor Day): John Thornton, “The Formation of the Atlantic World, 1250-1600; Wim Klooster, “The Rise and Transformation of the Atlantic World;” David Eltis, “Atlantic History in Global Perspective” (PDFs posted in Canvas Files)

*Monday, September 9:* Parry, *The Establishment of the European Hegemony*

*Monday, September 16:* Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*

*Monday, September 23:* Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*

*Monday, September 30:* Pagden, *Lords of all the World*

***Unit 1 essay due by Wednesday, October 2.***

***Unit 2: Approaches to Colonial Agency***

*Monday, October 7:* Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, Parts I & II

*Monday, October 14:* No class, fall break

*Monday, October 21:* White, *The Middle Ground*

*Monday, October 28:* Daniels and Kennedy, eds. *Negotiated Empires* (selections)

*Monday, November 4:* Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*

***Unit 2 essay due by Wednesday, November 6.***

***Unit 3: Recent Perspectives on Empire and Colonial Agency in Atlantic and World History***

*Monday, November 11:* Games, *The Web of Empire*

*Monday, November 18:* Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty*

*Monday, November 25:* Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession*

*Monday, December 2:* Kriger, *Making Money*

***Unit 3 essay due by Wednesday, December 4.***

***Final paper due by Monday, December 9.***