

HIS 414 / 514 – Social History in Global Perspective Fall 2020 – Asynchronous Online Guided Learning

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Messages via cell phone are often unintelligible. Speak slowly and repeat message.

Course Objectives: This course examines selected readings in social history as windows onto what is useful and distinctive about the new global history. In the mid-twentieth century came transformations in scholarship and teaching of history which brought to the fore important thematic approaches such as social history, gender, area studies, environmental history, and others. Overarching and incorporating such themes came also new kinds of historical perspective and practice. World historians focus on comparisons, connections, and networks viewed in large spatial scale or over long time periods. Over the semester we will explore and understand the ‘global’ as an alternative to Eurocentric and ‘presentist’ conceptions of the human past.

Student Learning Outcomes –

On completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Explain major social and cultural effects of intercontinental maritime trades between parts of Afro-Eurasia and/or the Americas;
- Analyze major themes and debates in the new global historiographies;
- Formulate historical questions and design research projects that employ cross-cultural, long term, or global-scale analytical approaches.

Requirements and Grading:

This course is an intensive readings course at the graduate level. Your main requirement is to keep up with the weekly readings and short assignments, while working project proposal assignment over the semester. Most of the primary source readings are available as Course Readings in Canvas via the HIS 414 or 514 module. Selected books for the book review assignment are available as eBooks or are on Reserve in Jackson Library for those with access.

Each week is devoted to a book and a primary source with some relation to it. Students will write a short position paper on each of the primary source readings (or viewings) each week. These short writings will be graded as 0, 2, 4, or 6 points each, together worth 30% of the final grade.

The book review assignment will be done early in the semester, leaving time for the project proposal due at the end of the semester. Reviews should be organized as if presenting it to students in class, stating the author’s main purpose or argument, a summary of the primary sources and analysis, if or how it contributes to a historiographical debate, if it breaks new ground or presents an unusual or alternative perspective, its strengths, and its weaknesses. Not all of these points need to be covered, but the review should give the reader a clear summary and overall conclusion about its merits. The review is worth 30% of the final course grade.

Outside of class, students will each develop a research project in Comparative / World history (worth 40% of the final course grade). The project will include the historical problem or questions to be addressed, discussion of the relevant literature, a preliminary annotated