

HIS 710: Atlantic World Colloquium (fall 2020)

Wednesdays 2:00-4:50 pm (via Zoom)

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SYNOPSIS

The Atlantic World provides a useful conceptual and methodological framework in which to analyze the flows of people, commodities, and ideas between the Americas, Europe, and Africa in the early modern period (roughly 1400-1800). We will read a selection of major works that 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 strengths and limits of an Atlantic perspective.



READINGS

Required:

Bailyn, Bernard. *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*. Harvard UP, 2005.

Crosby, Alfred. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. 30th anniversary edition. Praeger, 2003 (1972).

Ferreira, Roquinaldo. *Cross-cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil During the Era of the Slave Trade*. Cambridge UP, 2012.

Ferrer, Ada. *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution*. Cambridge UP: 2014.

Fogleman, Aaron Spencer. *Two Troubled Souls: An Eighteenth-Century Couple's Spiritual Journey in the Atlantic World*. UNC Press, 2014.

Kars, Marjoleine. *Blood on the River: A Chronicle of Mutiny and Freedom on the Wild Coast*. Basic Books: 2020.

Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Beacon Press, 2000.

Plank, Geoffrey. *Atlantic Wars: From the Fifteenth Century to the Age of Revolution*. Oxford UP, 2020.

Rushforth, Brett. *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France*. UNC Press for the Omohundro Institute, 2012.

Sachs, David Harris. *The Widening Gate: Bristol and the Atlantic Economy, 1450-1700*. UCA Press, 1991.

Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*. Second Edition. Cambridge UP, 1998.

Recommended:

Benjamin, Thomas. *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and their Shared History, 1400-1900*. Cambridge UP: 2009.

Graduate students should own, and consult often, the latest edition of at least one of the following:

Anthony Brundage. *Going to the Sources: A Guide to Historical Research and Writing*. Wiley Blackwell.

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. University of Chicago Press

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. Bedford/St. Martin's Press.

All readings are accessible electronically via the Jackson Library Website (unless otherwise noted); learning to navigate this system is part of your graduate training. Books can be purchased from the UNCG bookstore or (often more economically) from online sellers. Make sure you have the correct editions. Always bring a copy of the week's readings to class and be prepared to reference specific page numbers and passages in our discussion.

REQUIREMENTS

Graduate work requires active, enthusiastic participation at all levels; deep understanding of the material; engagement with classmates; and careful, timely completion of assignments. 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. 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. Always number your pages. Keep at hand and consult often a basic writing and style guide. (See page one of this syllabus for suggestions.) All assignments should be uploaded to Canvas; no paper copies are required.

Written Assignments (70% of total grade)

Unit papers (15% each): At the end of each unit students will write a short paper (5 -7 pages) comparing the readings and critically appraising similarities and differences in their approaches. Each paper is due no later than the Friday of the week we complete the unit. You are welcome to submit it earlier.

Outside book overview (10%): Each student will read one additional book and write a two-to-three-page overview to distribute to the class. Present a clear, succinct description of the work's scope; central argument and how the author develops it; discuss types and use of primary sources; and consider the major historiographic issues it addresses. Remember that your fellow classmates have not read the book, so you must be clear and more descriptive than you would be in other types of writing assignments. You will also give a brief presentation to the class. (See below.)

Final paper (15%): This is an opportunity to make an Atlantic World approach part of your own tool kit. The default assignment is to compare the approaches and perspectives of readings across all three units, considering their relevance to your own research. With my approval, you may instead develop an assignment that is more tailored to your specific interests; for example, you might explore the pedagogy of incorporating an Atlantic World perspective into an undergraduate course; rework an existing research paper with an Atlantic World focus; survey a corpus of material on a specific subtheme; or compile an annotated bibliography and accompanying essay in preparation for comps. We will discuss this assignment and the options in more detail.

Oral Assignments (30% of total grade)

Presentation of common book: Each week that we read a monograph, one or two students will give a brief presentation situating the work and its author in context and providing relevant background information. Give us an intellectual biography of the historian and their professional trajectory, including training, major career moments, publications, and impact. Summarize a representative range of journal reviews that indicate how the book has been received, the scope of its impact, perceived contributions to the field, and any major critiques that have been raised.

Presentation of outside book: Briefly present your book to the class; summarize its argument, approach, use of sources, etc.; and clearly describe how it fits with the week's monograph (and, as relevant, with other readings we have done). Consider the most appropriate readership; discuss its relevance; and give us a brief intellectual biography of the author. Note that this oral presentation is slightly different from your written overview.

Class participation: Active engagement with the material and pointed but courteous responses to your fellow students' ideas are expected. Come prepared to ask questions, to raise several key points, and to engage with others' ideas. You must cite specific pages to back up your points. Cultivate the art of being a thoughtful listener as well as an articulate speaker. Attendance is required except in case of illness or emergency. Missing more than one class, or repeatedly being unprepared, will seriously jeopardize your grade in this course.

HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

Although this course will be conducted entirely online, it is important that you regularly review UNCG's [COVID-19 UPDATES](#) and follow all required procedures any time you are on campus.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course students should have developed significant skill in:

- identifying a variety of interpretive approaches to Atlantic World history
- analyzing and comparing historical monographs for their conceptual framework, methodological approach, and use of evidence
- tracing developments in the historiography of the Atlantic World
- strengthening analytic abilities, both written and oral

SCHEDULE OF READINGS**Unit 1: Creating the Atlantic World**

Recommended for this unit: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*, Part I

Week 1 (August 19): John Thornton, "The Formation of the Atlantic World, 1250-1600," in John Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820* (Cambridge UP, 2012): 7-28; Wim Klooster, "The Rise and Transformation of the Atlantic World," in Wim Klooster and Alfred Padula, eds., *The Atlantic World: Essays on Slavery, Migration and Imagination*. Second Edition (Routledge 2018): 1-59; 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* (Taylor and Francis, 1992): 1-15.

Week 2 (August 26): Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*; Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities," *American Historical Review* 111:3 (June 2006): 741-57; David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History" (PDF posted in Canvas Files)

Week 3 (September 2): Articles/book chapters to be announced in Canvas

Week 4 (September 9): Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*

Week 5 (September 16): Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*

*** Paper 1 due by Friday, September 18 ***

Unit 2: Consolidating an Atlantic World

Recommended for this unit: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*, Part II

Week 6 (September 23): Sachs, *The Widening Gate*

Week 7 (September 30): Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*

Week 8 (October 7): Ferreira, *Cross-cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*

Week 9 (October 14): Fogleman, *Two Troubled Souls*

*** Paper 2 due by Friday, October 16 ***

Unit 3: Disrupting Atlantic Systems

Recommended for this unit: Benjamin, *The Atlantic World*, Part III

Week 10 (October 21): Plank, *Atlantic Wars*

Week 11 (October 28): Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*

Week 12 (November 4): Kars, *Blood on the River*

Week 13 (November 11): Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror*

*** Paper 3 due by Friday, November 13***

Week 14 (November 18): *Summation: The Early Modern Atlantic and Beyond*

** Articles and book chapters to be announced in Canvas ***

Final paper due by Wednesday, December 2