

HIS 715: Empires and Colonies of the Atlantic World (and Beyond) Fall 2021



Mondays 2:00-4:50 pm

MHRA 3208

Dr. Linda Rupert (lmrupert@uncg.edu; Moore HRA 2105)

Office hours: Mondays by appointment

This course surveys different approaches and themes related to the rise and consolidation of European overseas empires in the early modern period (roughly 1400-1800). We will discuss major trends in the historiography, with particular attention to changing perspectives on the relationship between, and the relative importance of, imperial structures, trans-imperial networks, and colonial agency. Students can pair this course with a section of HIS 715 on modern empires that Dr. Bender will teach in the spring.

Required Books

These can be purchased from the UNCG bookstore or online sellers. They are also on reserve at Jackson Library. Most are available as ebooks, except the three indicated with an asterisk. You will need to have a copy with page numbers available in class.

*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).

Elliott, J. H. *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (Yale University Press, 2006).

Games, Alison. *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).

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

Parry, J. H. *The Age of Reconnaissance: Discovery, Exploration and Settlement 1450 to 1650* (various editions, [1961]).

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

Rushforth, Brett. *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (UNC Press, 2012).

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

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

Wheat, David. *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (UNC Press, 2016).

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 imperial structures and colonial agency
- writing academic prose that is clear, pointed, and analytically rigorous
- engaging in persuasive, thoughtful, and courteous discussion with their academic peers

Course 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 this work compares to others 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 as a document upload to the course Canvas site (not a PDF).

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, Covid symptoms, or emergency. Come prepared to ask questions, to raise several key points, and to engage 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 papers (5-7 pages each) 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 the Thursday of the week the unit ends: September 30; November 4; December 2.
- A two to three-page review of your outside reading, with copies for the entire class. ***Due the week you present the book to the class.***

We will discuss the criteria for these assignments early in the semester and they will be posted to Canvas.

Covid-19 Policies

You should regularly review UNCG's Covid-19 policies (<https://covid.uncg.edu/>) and strictly follow all required procedures. In our classroom we will need to keep masks covering noses and mouths at all times; maintain 6 feet of distance from others; have assigned seats. You must not come to campus if you have any symptoms of Covid-19. The full required syllabus language is posted to the course Canvas site, but please note that circumstances and policies have changed since it was developed in July.

Academic Integrity: Enrollment in this course and submission of each assignment constitute a student's acceptance of [UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy](#), especially as it relates to plagiarism.

Schedule of Classes and Readings

Monday, August 23: Felipe Fernández-Armesto, "Empires in their Global Context;" 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)

Unit 1: Large Scale Processes

Monday, August 30: Parry, *Age of Reconnaissance*

Monday, September 6: No class (Labor Day holiday)

Monday, September 13: Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*

Monday, September 20: Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain*

Monday, September 27: Pagden, *Lords of all the World*

***** Paper #1 due by Thursday, September 30 *****

Unit 2: Colonial Agency and Encounters

Monday, October 4: Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History (Parts I & II only)**

Monday, October 11: No class (fall break)

Monday, October 18: Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions**

Monday, October 25: Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*

Monday, November 1: Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*

***** Paper #2 due by Thursday November 4 *****

Unit 3: Rethinking Structure and Agency

Monday, November 8: Games, *The Web of Empire*

Monday, November 15: Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty**

Monday, November 22: Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean*

Monday, November 29: Kriger, *Making Money* and course summation

***** Paper #3 due by Thursday, December 2 *****