

# HIS 715: Empires and Colonies of the Atlantic World (and Beyond) Fall 2023



Mondays 2:00-4:50 pm

School of Education #208

Dr. Linda Rupert ([lmrupert@uncg.edu](mailto: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 the agency of different colonial groups.

## 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).

We will also be reading some journal articles and selections from Nicholas Canny and Philip Morgan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World: 1450-1850* (Oxford University Press, 2011), all available electronically.

**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.

## **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, among others: 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. Graduate students 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: 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). Footnotes, with page numbers, are required.

### **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 our 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 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 dates: September 28; November 2; November 30 (Thursday following end of unit).
- A two to three-page review of your outside reading, geared to your classmates, 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.

**Schedule of Classes and Readings**

*Monday, August 21:* Course introduction

***Unit 1: Approaches to Large Scale Processes***

*Monday, August 28:* Parry, *Age of Reconnaissance*

*Monday, September 4:* No class (Labor Day holiday)  
Suggested readings posted to Canvas.\*

*Monday, September 11:* Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*

*Monday, September 18:* Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain*

*Monday, September 25:* Pagden, *Lords of all the World*

**\*\*\* Paper #1 due by Thursday, September 28 \*\*\***

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

*Monday, October 2:* Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Parts I & II only)

*Monday, October 9:* No class (fall break)  
Suggested readings posted to Canvas\*

*Monday, October 16:* Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*

*Monday, October 23:* Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*

*Monday, October 30:* Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance*

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

***Unit 3: Rethinking the Connections Between Structure and Agency***

*Monday, November 6:* Games, *The Web of Empire*

*Monday, November 13:* Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty*

*Monday, November 20:* Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean*

*Monday, November 27:* Kriger, *Making Money* and course summation

**\*\*\* Paper #3 due by Thursday, November 30 \*\*\***

\*These readings are required of students who are preparing an Atlantic World comps field with me, and highly encouraged for everyone.