

**THE ATLANTIC WORLD:
SOCIETY, CULTURE, & ECONOMICS, 1492-1804**

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In 1492, Columbus sailed the Ocean Blue; or so goes the rhyme well known to every American schoolchild. That famed voyage initiated events and processes that radically transformed the society, culture, economics, and politics of the early modern world, laying the blueprint for the world we live in today. Looking at the histories of four continents- Europe, Africa, North America, and South America- this lecture and light discussion-based seminar explores the development of an “Atlantic World” from the late fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries through the experiences and exchanges of those who inhabited it- Europeans, indigenous people, and slaves. Following an emerging trend in Atlantic historiography, this course challenges the assumption that the Atlantic Ocean served strictly as a barrier to human interaction and exchange. Instead, we will consider the argument that the Atlantic Ocean served as a conduit of exchange between the Old World and the New, facilitating the distribution of commodities, culture, and society across the Ocean in the Spanish, British, French, Dutch, and Portuguese empires. We will examine the social, cultural, and economic results of exchange in the Atlantic including the migrations of people (both voluntary and forced), labor and exchange systems, the rise of new commodities, changes in family life, and the revolutionary movements of the eighteenth century.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) Provide a definition of “Atlantic” history and assess its validity as an analytic category.
- 2) Understand the intercolonial exchanges, similarities, and differences between the Spanish, English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese empires.
- 3) Confidently cite and analyze (translated) primary source documents from the Atlantic World and explain their significance to Atlantic historiography.
- 4) Identify “key” developments in Atlantic history such as migrations, the slave trade, new commodities, imperial ideologies, and revolutionary movements.

COURSE STRUCTURE: This class is primarily a lecture course. However, on several occasions, as noted in the syllabus, there will be in-class discussions of our readings. These discussions will cover both primary and secondary sources that have been assigned. The purpose of these discussions is to tie lecture material to reading, discussing the important developments in Atlantic History. The course is broken into four units: Unit 1: Introductions & Migrations; Unit 2: New Economic Systems; Unit 3: Society, Family, & Identity; Unit 4: The Atlantic in Revolution. The mid term examination will cover Units 1 & 2. The final exam is cumulative, drawing on all four units.

Sample Syllabus II – Atlantic World

COURSE REQUIREMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS:

- **10% Class Attendance and Participation-** Students are expected to attend *all* class meetings and be active participants in our class discussions. Aim for *at least two* contributions to our discussions. Excessive unexcused absences (more than 2) will negatively impact your grade.
- **25% Reflection Papers (5)-** On select Thursdays students will submit a short (min-one page, max-two pages, double-spaced) writing exercise that analyzes at least one of that week's required primary source documents. You should not merely summarize what the author said, but include a thoughtful analysis of the text, relating it back to our secondary source readings and class discussions.
- **30% Mid-Term Exam-** This take home exam is due **Tuesday, April 1** at the beginning of class and covers Units 1 and 2. The exam will consist of two parts: 1) “IDs” (5 out of 8) and 2) one essay question, three to five typed, double-spaced pages. Further information will be provided closer to test date.
- **35% Final Exam-** This is a comprehensive exam with two parts: 1) ID’s (8 of 12) and an essay (5-6 handwritten pages, single-spaced) exam. It is scheduled for **Friday, May 9.**

READING SCHEDULE:

UNIT I: INTRODUCTIONS & MIGRATIONS

WEEK 1: The Atlantic as an Analytic Category

Tuesday 1/21: Introductions & What is “Atlantic” history?

⇒ Required: Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (to be completed before class)

⇒ Due: A brief paragraph that provides your definition of “Atlantic” history- geographic, temporal, and thematic.

Thursday 1/23: Assessing “Atlantic”

⇒ Required: Alison Games, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, Opportunities” in *American Historical Review* 111, 3 (June 2009): 741-57; Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, “Some Caveats about the Atlantic Paradigm” *History Compass* 1 (2003): 1-4. (Find on JSTOR)

WEEK 2: Comparative Conquest & Possession

Tuesday 1/28: Cortés & Newport: Spanish & English Conquest

⇒ Required: “Introduction: Worlds Overseas” and Chapter 1 “Intrusion and Empire” in J.H. Elliott *Empires of the Atlantic World*

Thursday: 1/30: Ceremonies of Possession

⇒ Required: “Introduction: Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640” in Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*

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WEEK 3: Migration Patterns

Tuesday 2/4: English Migration

⇒ Required: Alison Games, “Migration and the Atlantic World” in *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World*

Thursday 2/6: French & Spanish Migration

⇒ Required: Kenneth Banks, “The Rise of the French Atlantic to 1762,” in *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*

WEEK 4: African Encounters

Tuesday 2/11: Early Euro-African Commerce

⇒ Required: Chapters 2 (p. 43-72) in John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*

Thursday 2/13: Slavery in Africa

⇒ Required: Chapter 4 “The Process of Enslavement and the Slave Trade” (pp. 98-125) in Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*

WEEK 5: Forced Migrations: Living the Slave Trade

Tuesday 2/18: Discussion: African Views of Slavery- Princes of Calabar I

⇒ Required Primary Source: Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 in Randy Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*

⇒ Recommended: Chapter 5 (p. 129-151) in Thornton, *Africa and Africans*

Thursday 2/20: Discussion: African Views of Slavery- Princes of Calabar II

⇒ Required Primary Source: Chapters 3-6 in Randy Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*

⇒ Due: Reflection Paper 1

UNIT 2: NEW ECONOMIC SYSTEMS

WEEK 6: The Rise of Sugar

Tuesday 2/25: Consumption

⇒ Required: Chapter 2 “Consumption” in Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*

Thursday 2/27: Production

⇒ Required: Chapter 3 “Production” in Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*

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WEEK 7: Plantation Society

Tuesday 3/4: Rise of Plantation Class: Barbados

⇒ Required: Chapter 2 “The Rise of the Planter Class: Barbados” in Richard Dunn, *Sugar & Slaves*

Thursday 3/6: Discussion: Plantations in Brazil

⇒ Required: Chapter 1 “The Sugar Plantation” in Stuart Schwartz *Sugar Plantations in the Formation of a Brazilian Society*

⇒ Required Primary Source(s): Before class browse The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in Americas collection, in particular the galleries: Maps: Africa, New World, Slave Trade; Capture of Slaves & Coffles in Africa; Plantations

⇒ Due: Reflection Paper 2

WEEK 8: Consumer Revolution

Tuesday 3/11: European Household Economy & Industrious Revolution

⇒ Required: Jan de Vries “Between Purchasing Power and the World of Goods: Understanding the Household Economy in Early Modern Europe” (posted to BB)

Thursday 3/13: Consumer Revolution & the Colonies

⇒ Required: T.H. Breen, “The meaning of things: Interpreting the consumer economy in the eighteenth century”

MIDTERM EXAMS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED THURS- DUE TUES 3/25

WEEK 9: Intercolonial Trade & Migration

Tuesday 3/18: The Case of New Orleans

Required: Chapter 3: “A Backwater Entrepot” in Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans*

Thursday 3/20: The Case of Virginia

Required: Chapter 4 “Intercolonial Migration” in Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia*

UNIT 3: SOCIETY, FAMILY, & IDENTITY

WEEK 10: Atlantic Family Life

Tuesday 3/25: Discussion: Samuel Sewall’s Diary Part I

⇒ Required: Introduction and Chapters 1-5 in *Puritan Family Life: The Diary of Samuel Sewall*, ed. Judith Graham

MIDTERM TAKE HOME EXAM DUE TODAY

Thursday 3/27: Discussion: Samuel Sewall’s Diary Part II

⇒ Required Primary Source: Chapters 6-10 in *Puritan Family Life*

⇒ Due: Reflection Paper 3

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WEEK 11: Inculcating Identity onto Natives

Tuesday 4/1: Discussion: Jesuit Adaptation

- ⇒ Required: “When in Rome” in Axtell, *The Invasion Within*
- ⇒ Required Primary Source: Selections from *The Jesuit Relations*

Thursday 4/3: Praying to be English

- ⇒ Required: “Reduce Them to Civility” in Axtell, *The Invasion Within*
- ⇒ Due: Reflection Paper 4

WEEK 12: SPRING BREAK- NO CLASS

UNIT 4: ATLANTIC IN REVOLUTION

WEEK 13: Origins of Revolution in Print and Material Culture

Tuesday 4/15: Discussion: The Ideological Origins of Revolution

- ⇒ Required: Chapter 2 “Sources and Traditions,” *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* by Bernard Bailyn
- ⇒ Required Primary Source: Selection of Revolutionary pamphlets

Thursday 4/17: The Marketplace of Revolution

- ⇒ Required: Breen- *Marketplace of Revolution* Selections
- ⇒ Due: Reflection Paper 5

WEEK 14: American Colonies in Revolution

Tuesday 4/22: Men and the American Revolution

- ⇒ Required: Chapter 2: “Reluctant Revolutionaries” and Chapter 3 “A Well Ordered Revolution” in Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*

Thursday 4/24: Revolution outside the 13 Original Colonies

- ⇒ Required: Chapter 6, “The Crisis of American Independence” in *An Empire Divided* by Andrew O’Shaughnessy

WEEK 15: Revolution in French Colonies

Tuesday 4/29: French Slave Revolts- Haiti

- ⇒ Required: Chapter 1, “Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean” by David Patrick Geggus *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*

Thursday 5/1: Wrap Up: The Atlantic As a Category of Analysis