

History 459

The Atlantic World, 1492-1860
Northern Illinois University

Fall 2004

Tue & Thurs 11:00-12:15
Room: DuSable 446
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Office hours: Tues. & Thurs. 2-3:00 pm
and by appointment anytime

The “Atlantic World” was the world made by contacts between Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans. In this course we will explore the nature of the encounters between men and women in these three groups during the era that began with Columbus, who initiated the first permanent contact between Europeans and native peoples of the Americas. The era ends with the independence of most American colony-states and the end of the slave trade in the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. Rather than studying the Atlantic world in its various geographic segments (i.e. Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America), we will investigate important themes in that world in a comparative and/or integrated way. This should help us better understand how certain critical historical developments occurred throughout this important region – developments that shaped the modern world to this very day.

There are several objectives for students to achieve in this course. The first is to explore a new field in historical studies. (“Atlantic world” studies as we know it did not begin until the late 1980s.) Another objective is to explore the wider context of American history and see how it was a part of much larger developments. Still another objective is to challenge students of European, African, and Latin American history to explore the ways in which these areas, along with North America, were or were not integrated demographically, culturally, economically, politically, and otherwise. Also, this course is intended to help students improve critical thinking and historical writing, bringing both to a more sophisticated and effective level.

The course is divided into three parts. Part I, entitled “Theory, Definition, and Approach,” will introduce students to this new field of study and how historians have recently found new ways to explain and understand the history of contacts and developments among Atlantic peoples in the early modern and colonial eras. Part II, entitled “The Black Atlantic,” explores one of the central feature of the making of the Atlantic world, that is the role of black people in Africa and the Americas. It is both a study of oppression and struggle, cultural change and diversity, as Africans were enslaved and transported throughout the Americas and to some extent Europe, yet played a critical, active role in shaping the “Atlantic world” as it developed in this era. Part III, entitled “Winning and Losing the Americas,” will focus on the paradox of how Europeans with enslaved Africans essentially succeeded in conquering the Americas, yet ultimately lost most of their colonies by the first half of the 19th century.

Required reading:*Books*

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*

David Eltis, *The Rise of Slavery in the Americas*

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away:*

Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846

Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*

Short readings on electronic reserve in the library

David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History.”

Nicholas Canny, “Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America.”

John H. Elliott, “Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World.”

David Buisseret and Steven G. Reinhardt (eds.), “Introduction,” *Creolization in the Americas*.

Hein Vanhee, “Central African Popular Christianity and the Making of the Haitian Vodou Religion.”

The Journal of Christopher Columbus, on the “discovery” of America.

Patricia Seed, “Introduction,” *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe’s Conquest of the New World*.

Aaron Fogleman, “From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution.”

Ida Altman and James Horn, “Introduction,” *“To Make America”: European Migrations in the Early Modern Period, 1500-1800*.

William Cronon, “Indians, Colonists, and Property Rights.”

James Axtell, “White Indians of Colonial America.”

Anthony Pagden and Nicholas Canny, “From Identity to Independence.”

Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, “The Haitian Revolution (1791-1806): Economic and Social Dynamics,” in *Haiti: The Breached Citadel*.

Grading:

Participation (30%): Students must keep up with the readings and actively participate in class discussions to do well in this course. The participation grade will be based on attendance, short quizzes over daily readings (students may drop the worst grade), and active contributions to class discussions.

Paper 1 (10%), 2-3 pages, due in class Tuesday, September 14: Analyze the various theoretical approaches encountered at the beginning of this course and provide your own opinion of what the Atlantic world is (or was), how it might be best studied, and what it might tell us if we do.

Paper 2 (25%), 4-5 pages, due in class Thursday, October 21: Answer the following question: What was the “Black Atlantic” and what role did it play in the creation and dissolution of the Atlantic world?

Paper 3 (35%), 7-8 pages, due in class Tuesday, December 7: How did Europeans “win,” but then “lose” the Americas?

All papers must be double spaced in 12 pt Times New Roman font with one inch margins on all sides of the page. No bibliography is necessary. The three parts of the course correspond to the three paper assignments, and students must rely heavily on all of the reading materials, lectures, and discussions from each part when writing each paper. No reading beyond what is listed above is required. Further, all sources must be cited in proper footnotes. Note: Students *must* submit Paper 3 to pass the course.

Tentative Schedule:

Part I *Theory, Definition, and Approach*

Aug 24-26 Introduction

Aug 31-Sep 2 Conceptualizing Atlantic History – What is New and Different About It?
Read the following on electronic reserves: Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History,” and Canny, “Writing Atlantic History”

Sep 7-9 Identity and Cultural Formation in the New World
Read Elliott, “Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World” and Buisseret and Reinhardt on “creolization,” on e-reserves

Part II *The Black Atlantic*

- Sep 14-16 The Role of Africa and Africans in the Atlantic World
Paper 1 due in class Tuesday
 Read Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*
- Sep 21-23 The Slave Trade and Slavery
 Read Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*, pp. 1-257
- Sep 28-30 The Maritime World for Free and Enslaved Blacks
 Read *Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*
- Oct 5-7 Emancipation, Revolution, and Ideas
 - The movement toward emancipation, 1760-1860 (Read Eltis, 258-284)
 - The Haitian Revolution (Read Bellegarde-Smith on e-reserves)
- Oct 12-14 Religion and Culture
 Read Vanhee on Voodoo in Haiti, e-reserves
Paper 2 due in class Thursday
- Part III Winning and Losing the Americas*
- Oct 19-21 The European Invasion of America
 Read Columbus' Journal and Seed, "Ceremonies of Possession" on e-reserves
- Oct 26-28 Disease and Population Exchange in the Atlantic World
 Read Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*
- Nov 2-4 Atlantic Migrations, Forced and Free
 Read Fogleman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers"
 and Altman and Horn, "To Make America" on e-reserves
- Nov 9-11 Gender, Marriage, Sexuality, and Power
 Read Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*
- Nov 16-18 European-Native Relations in North America
 Read Cronon, "Indians, Colonists, and Property Rights," and Axtell, "White Indians" on e-reserves
- Nov 23-25 Religion: Christianization and Syncretism

Nov 25 Thanksgiving – no class

Nov 30-Dec 2 Atlantic Models of Revolution, Independence, and Political Culture
Read Pagden and Canny, “From Identity to Independence” on e-reserves

Tues., Dec 7 Paper 3 due in class at 10:00am.