

**History 590
2006**

The Atlantic World, 1492-1860s

Spring

Northern Illinois University

Tuesdays 6:00-8:40pm
Room: Founders Library 340
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Prof. Aaron Fogleman
Office: Zulauf 613
Office hours: Tues. 3:00-4:20 &
Wed. 3:00-4:30 & by appointment

The “Atlantic World” was the world made by contacts between Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans. In this “readings” 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 through them Africans) and native peoples of the Americas. The era ended with independence of American colony-states and the end of the slave trade, which took place from the late 18th century to the 1860s. With these events the relationships among Europe, Africa, and the Americas changed fundamentally and permanently. Moreover, new global trade patterns, technological developments, and ultimately industrialization gave rise to different kinds of relationships and geographical, economic, demographic, political, and cultural configurations. For the most part we will not study the Atlantic world in its various geographic segments (i.e. Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America), but rather important themes in that world in a comparative and/or integrated way.

The premise of the course is that we can better understand the encounters, exchanges, and clashes between Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans if we study them in their Atlantic context. With this in mind there are several goals 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 help M.A. and Ph.D. students prepare for a comprehensive examination in this field. Further, this course should provide a valuable foundation for teaching and pursuing research in the history of the Atlantic World. It should also help students better understand how certain critical historical developments occurred throughout this important region – developments that shaped the modern world to this very day. Still another objective is to challenge students of pre-colonial Africa, colonial British, French, and Latin America, and early modern Europe to explore the ways in which these areas were or were not integrated demographically, culturally, economically, politically, and otherwise.

Required General Readings

Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900*

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800, 2nd edition*

Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World*

Roger M. Carpenter, *The Renewed, the Destroyed, and the Remade: The Three Thought Worlds of the Iroquois and the Huron, 1609-1650*

Lester Langley, *The Americas in the Age of Revolution: 1750-1850* David Northrup, *Africa's*

Discovery of Europe, 1450-1850 Students will also be responsible for the following short readings located on e-reserves, as well as readings on topics they select:

- 1) Aaron Fogleman, "The Atlantic World, 1492-1860s: Definition, Theory, and Boundaries"
- 2) Nicholas Canny, "Writing Atlantic History; or Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America"
- 3) David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History"
- 4) Excerpts from *The Journal of Christopher Columbus*, on the "discovery" of America.
- 5) Patricia Seed, "Introduction," *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World*
- 6) Paul E. Lovejoy, "The African Diaspora: Revisionist Interpretations of Ethnicity, Culture and Religion Under Slavery"
- 7) David Hancock, "The British Atlantic World: Co-ordination, Complexity, and the Emergence of an Atlantic Market Economy, 1651-1815"
- 8) Philip Steinberg, "Ocean-Space and Merchant Capitalism"
- 9) Joseph C. Miller, "A Theme in Variations: A Historical Schema of Slaving in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Regions"
- 10) Linda M. Heywood, "Portuguese into Africans: The Eighteenth-Century Central African Background to Atlantic Creole Cultures"
- 11) David Buisseret, "Introduction," *Creolization in the Americas*
- 12) Hein Vanhee, "Central African Popular Christianity and the Making of the Haitian Vodou Religion"
- 13) Vera Lind, "Privileged Dependency on the Edge of the Atlantic World: Africans and Germans in the Eighteenth Century"
- 14) Eric Williams, "Slavery, Industrialization, and Abolition," excerpts from *Capitalism and Slavery*
- 15) Barbara Solow & Stanley Engerman, "Introduction," *British Capitalism and Slavery*

Two invaluable websites for this class that include excellent bibliographies are:

Harvard Seminar on the Atlantic World: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~atlantic>

H-Atlantic: <http://www.h-net.org/~atlantic/>

Grading:

Class participation (30%) – your active participation in weekly discussions of readings, presentations, and critiques of the presentations by other students, as well as some short assignments and discussion of them in class.

Theory Paper (10%) – Due in class January 31, this is a 2-3 page paper in which you explain your understanding of the Atlantic World in a theoretical sense and how you might apply this approach in your area of interest.

Final paper (60%) – Each of you will read a few of the major secondary works on a topic we have discussed in the course (subject to my approval) and submit a ca. 20 page paper on your topic no later than Friday, May 5 at 3:00pm. The paper should be typed (double-spaced) with footnotes and bibliography, and it should include the following:

- a theoretical discussion on the concept of the “Atlantic world”
- a critical discussion of a place and/or topic and the most important literature about it, i.e. the major issues and arguments as they appear in the most important secondary works
- an assessment of what an “Atlantic World” perspective can or cannot reveal about your place/topic generally, i.e. how it might add to our historical knowledge about it
- an example of an important issue(s) concerning your place/topic and how your perspective on it is changed using the Atlantic world perspective

Tentative Course Schedule:

January 17 Introduction

January 24 Atlantic World Theory & Library Resources

Use of library resources with reference librarian Jim Millhorn. Meet in Founders, Room 297.
Read: 1) Fogelman, “The Atlantic World, 1492-1860s: Definition, Theory, and Boundaries,”
2) Canny, “Writing Atlantic History...,” and 3) Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History”

January 31 “First Contact” in the Atlantic World

Meet at my house in Batavia.
Theory paper due.
Read in Columbus’ diary and Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession*, Introduction.
Bring in another “first contact” document and discuss.

February 7 Population, Environment, Ecology

Read Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*

February 14 The Black Atlantic

Read Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, and
Lovejoy, "The African Diaspora: Revisionist Interpretations of Ethnicity, Culture and Religion
Under Slavery"

February 21 Microhistory: Religion, Gender, and Cultural Conversion

Read Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival*

February 28 Native Americans

Read Carpenter, *The Renewed, the Destroyed, and the Remade*

March 7 The Maritime World

Read Hancock, "Co-ordination, Complexity, and the Emergence of an Atlantic Market Economy"
and Steinberg, "Ocean-Space and Merchant Capitalism"

March 14 Spring Break (oral reports on personal activities in the Atlantic world due upon return)

March 21 Revolutions

Read Langley, *The Americans in the Age of Revolutions*

March 28 More Discussion of Theoretical Approaches

Read one of the following:

- 1) Miller, "A Historical Schema of Slaving in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Regions"
- 2) Heywood, "Portuguese into Africans"
- 3) Buisseret, "Introduction," *Creolization in the Americas*
- 4) Vanhee, "Central African Popular Christianity and the Making of the Haitian Vodou Religion"

and bring in another theoretical Atlantic World piece on your topic for discussion.

April 4 Africans in Europe

Read Northrup, *Africa's Discovery of Europe* and

Lind, "Privileged Dependency on the Edge of the Atlantic World"

April 11 Capitalism and Slavery

Read Eric Williams, "Slavery, Industrialization, and Abolition,"
and Solow & Engerman, "Introduction," *British Capitalism and Slavery*

April 18 Presentations

April 25 Presentations

May 2 Presentations

May 5 (Friday) Final Papers are due by 3:00pm.