

## **THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1450-1800**

HIST 6686-01

Pafford 204, W 5:30-8:00 PM

Dr. Gary Van Valen

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Office hours: MW 1:30-3:30 PM, TuTh 12:30-3:30 PM, or by appointment

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### **Course Description**

The world today owes much good and bad to the Atlantic World, a term the past generation of historians developed to describe the interconnected societies and cultures around the Atlantic Ocean from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Those years saw an unprecedented exchange of populations, ideas, crops, diseases, raw materials, and manufactured goods. Within the last twenty years, scholars have explored these transnational exchanges and come to argue that neither Africa, the Americas, nor Europe can be completely understood without placing their histories within a comparative context.

In this period, the diverse peoples of the four continents bordering the Atlantic Ocean were compelled to interact with one another to an unprecedented degree. In the process, Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans created a new world marked by constant contact and negotiation. This course seeks to connect and combine the usually separate histories of Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean, and to demonstrate how the most important processes of change can be understood only through this Atlantic frame of reference. Topics in this course will include early maritime explorations, imperial expansion and colonization, European-Amerindian relations, European-African relations, slavery and the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the growth of mercantile capitalism and the establishment of an Atlantic economy, the maturation of Euro-American colonial societies and their struggles for autonomy and national independence.

### **Course Objectives**

Students will be able to integrate their knowledge of the colonial Americas, early modern Europe, and Africa in the age of the slave trade. They will be introduced to the growing field of Atlantic history and to the challenges of investigating historical problems from a comparative, transnational perspective. They will be challenged to explore the ways in which Europe, Africa, North America, the Caribbean, and Latin America were or were not integrated demographically, culturally, economically, and politically. Students who apply themselves will also improve their critical thinking and historical writing skills and their knowledge of places beyond their own familiar world. At a time when Americans need to understand diversity and global interconnectedness to succeed in the modern world, students will learn that their own country has always been diverse and always part of a larger world.

### **Course Requirements**

You will be expected to attend class, do the assigned readings beforehand, write reviews of books, and discuss assigned readings in class. Your class participation grade will depend upon these discussions. At least once every month, you should submit written evidence of progress on a graduate-quality research paper or bibliographic essay (first a bibliography, then drafts). You may choose any

topic within the parameters of Atlantic history, as long as it deals with some sort of connection between different geographical regions (Europe, Africa, North America, Latin America, Caribbean) or political units (e.g. Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, British, French empires; indigenous or maroon societies, etc.).

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus. It is your responsibility to attend class so that you may be aware of any changes.

### **Grading**

Class participation	10%
7 of the 10 possible papers/reviews	70% (10% each)
Research Paper or Bibliographic Essay and presentation	20%

### **Academic Honesty**

You are expected to be familiar with and abide by the university's policies on academic honesty. As a West Georgia student, you have pledged not to lie, cheat, steal, or commit plagiarism. It is equally wrong to give aid as it is to receive it. When copying word for word from another source, you must use quotation marks and cite your source. When paraphrasing material or borrowing another author's ideas, you must also cite your source. Assignments are to be done independently. Two or more students cannot hand in variations of the same paper, even if they study together. You are not allowed to submit your own work from a previous course without the prior instructor's and my permission. You can review the Honor Code at <http://www.westga.edu/~handbook/index.php?page=honorcode>. Any lying, cheating, stealing, or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment, test, or quiz in which it was committed.

### **Special Accommodations**

If you are on record with the university's Disability Services as having special academic or physical needs requiring accommodations, please meet with me during my regular office hours as soon as possible. We need to discuss your accommodations before they can be implemented. Also, please note that arrangements for special accommodations must be made at least one week before the exams.

If you believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not formally contacted Disability Services, please call (678) 839-6428 or drop by the Student Development Center at 272 Parker Hall.

### **Policy on Electronic Devices and Communication**

Cell phones and pagers must be turned off prior to entering the classroom. Do not text, check your messages, or use the internet on any device during class time. The use of any electronic device during a quiz or exam is strictly prohibited and will be considered a breach of academic honesty, with the result of a grade of zero for the quiz or exam.

Laptops may be used in the classroom only for taking notes and with the instructor's permission. Permission may be revoked if laptops are used for other purposes during class.

To protect your privacy, all electronic communication with me must be conducted through your West Georgia e-mail. As all e-mail is potentially insecure, I will only discuss your grades with you in person. Please be aware that I will not always be able to respond to e-mails or phone messages immediately, and will not answer e-mails asking for information that can be easily found on the syllabus. If you have an urgent matter, talk to me in person—either in class, or in my office.

## Required Books

- Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange* (Praeger, 2003) ISBN 9780275980924
- Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Penguin, 1986) ISBN 9780140092332
- Richard L. Kagan and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500–1800* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008) ISBN 9780801890352
- Christopher Hodson, *The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History* (Oxford University Press, 2016) ISBN 9780190610739
- Bruce Chatwin, *The Viceroy of Ouidah* (Penguin, 1988) ISBN 9780140112900
- Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving Port, 1727–1892* (Ohio University Press, 2005) ISBN 9780821415726
- Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) ISBN 9780521588140
- Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History* (New York University Press, 2009) ISBN 9780814747896
- Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Beacon Press, 2013 reprint edition) ISBN 9780807033173
- Andrew J. O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) ISBN 9780812217322
- Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions* (Harvard University Press, 2010) ISBN 9780674035911.

## Course Schedule

DATE TOPICS and READINGS

Jan. 11 Introduction to the class

Jan. 18 readings on Atlantic history as a field of study:

David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History” from Armitage and Braddick, eds. *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*.

Nicolas Canny, “Writing Atlantic History; or, Reconfiguring the History of Colonial British America,” *Journal of American History* 86 (Dec. 1999), 1093-1114.

Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, “Empires in their Global Context, 1500-1800) in *The Atlantic in Global History*.

Martin W. Lewis “Inventing Oceans” and David Armitage “The Varieties of Atlantic History” both in *Major Problems in Atlantic History*.

Jan. 25 *The Columbian Exchange*

Feb. 1 *Sweetness and Power*

- Feb. 8            *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500–1800*
- Feb. 15          *The Acadian Diaspora: An Eighteenth-Century History*
- Feb. 22          *The Viceroy of Ouidah*, watch film *Cobra Verde*
- Mar. 1            *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving Port, 1727–1892*
- Mar. 8            *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy, 1660-1800*
- Mar. 15          *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*
- Mar. 22          NO CLASS Spring Break
- Mar. 29          *The Many-Headed Hydra*
- Apr. 5            *An Empire Divided*
- Apr. 12          *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions*
- Apr. 19          Work on final paper
- Apr. 26          Present final paper

Aug. 23

The Atlantic, Europeans

Ch. 1

Aug. 25	Africans, Americans	Ch. 1
Aug. 30	Sugar, Early Atlantic Exploration	Ch. 2
Sept. 1	Aztec and Inca Empires	Ch. 2
Sept. 6	Spanish Caribbean and Portuguese Brazil	Ch. 3
Sept. 8	Spanish Mainland Conquests <b><i>Columbian Exchange</i> paper due</b>	Ch. 3
Sept. 13	European Politics and Challenges to Spain	Ch. 4
Sept. 15	Spanish Crisis and Northern European Settlements	Ch. 4
Sept. 20	Labor and Settlements	Ch. 5
Sept. 22	The Atlantic Slave Trade	Ch. 6
Sept. 27	West and Central Africa <b><i>Viceroy of Ouidah</i> paper due</b>	Ch. 6
Sept. 29	Slavery and Resistance in the Americas	Ch. 6
Oct. 4	Film: <i>Cobra Verde</i>	
Oct. 6	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
Oct. 11	Native Americans and European Empires	
Oct. 13	Trade and Consumption	Ch. 7
Oct. 18	Racial and Cultural Mixture <b><i>Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolutions</i> paper due</b>	Ch. 8
Oct. 20	Guest speaker: Dr. George Kieh	
Oct. 25	Imperial Wars and Piracy	Ch. 9
Oct. 27	Imperial Reform and Resistance	Ch. 9
Nov. 1	American Revolution	Ch. 10
Nov. 3	French Revolution	Ch. 11

Nov. 8	Revolution in the Caribbean	Ch. 11
Nov. 10	Latin American Independence <b><i>Francisco de Miranda</i> paper due</b>	Ch. 12
Nov. 15	Latin American Independence, continued	Ch. 12
Nov. 17	Industrialization and Economic Change	Ch. 13
Nov. 21-25	NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)	
Nov. 29	Abolishing slavery	Ch. 14
Dec. 1	Legacies of the Atlantic World <b>Final version of research paper or bibliographic essay due</b>	
Dec. 6	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> , 5:30-7:30 PM in Pafford 206	