



HISTORY 360

HISTORIES OF THE FRENCH AND SPANISH ATLANTIC, 1450-1830

Instructor: Dr. Graham Nessler

Class Meets: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:15, BA 243

Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences 146

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 PM, and Thursdays, 1:45-4:45 PM

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Please see the note on communication below.

This syllabus is subject to change (any updated versions will be posted to eCollege)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course explores the intertwined histories of two of the most important empires in the New World from the origins of the “Atlantic System” in the fifteenth century to the end of Spanish colonial rule in much of Latin America in the early nineteenth century. Over these four centuries, dynamic networks of forced and (semi-)free migration, commerce, governance, and social life tied together large parts of Europe, Africa, and the Americas, creating new peoples, languages, markets, societies, and ideas. While Spain was the oldest colonial power in the Americas and arguably left the greatest imprint there of all the European colonizers, France was a major player in the African Atlantic slave trade and claimed control over the world’s richest plantation colony in the eighteenth century, where the world’s only successful slave revolution transpired just a few decades after the American Revolution.

Over the course of this term, we will use the histories of the “French” and “Spanish” Atlantic to anchor an exploration of political, economic, and social change in the broader Atlantic World. We will discuss and debate questions such as: Was Europe the central actor in shaping the development of the Atlantic World? What alternative frames can we employ that emphasize the vital roles of Africans and native Americans? How did governance, economics, racial formation, and slave systems differ in the French and Spanish worlds and beyond? Is the concept of an “Atlantic World” still viable today, or is it based on historical conditions that no longer exist? In particular, this course will examine the emergence, functioning, and gradual dismantling of the transatlantic slave trade and its centrality in the making of the modern world. By carefully studying far-reaching historical changes and connecting them to events “on the ground” in a variety of places, students will acquire a greater appreciation for historical contingency and learn to situate the United States and Latin America within Atlantic and global contexts.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will acquire a firm understanding of the importance of slavery and the slave trade in the Atlantic World.
2. Students will understand and assess major political, economic and social developments in the French and Spanish empires.
3. Students will evaluate several major texts in Atlantic history.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required Texts:

[AW] Benjamin, Thomas. *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and their Shared History, 1400-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. [ISBN: 9780521616492]

[AA] Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. [ISBN: 0521627249]

Other required readings are available on the course's eCollege page.

Grading:

The components of this course will be weighted into the final grade as follows:

- Midterm Exam: 20% of your final grade
- Presentation: 10% of your final grade
- Paper: 25% of your final grade
- Final Exam: 30% of your final grade
- Attendance and Participation in Discussions: 15% of your final grade

Grading Scale:

A=90-100%

B=80-89%

C=70-79%

D=60-69%

F=59% and below

Midterm Exam (October 18):

The midterm exam will cover all material from the beginning of the term through Week VIII. You will need a blue book for it and for the final exam. Further details will be provided in class.

Presentation:

Most Thursday sessions of this course will be devoted to discussions, and the participation of all students is critical for the success of this component of this course. As part of these discussions,

each student will join one of nine discussion groups which will present on the readings for one of the weeks of this class during our Thursday discussion. The list of discussion groups is below; we will divide the class into discussion groups the first week of class. On each discussion day, the two or three students who comprise the week's group will collaborate to present summaries and analysis of the readings. The group will summarize the authors' main arguments, evaluate their use of evidence and the effectiveness of their interpretations, and convey to the class what the main contributions and limitations of these readings are. Each student must also create at least one discussion question for the class that engages with the themes and key questions raised by the readings (questions must thus go far beyond merely asking peers to regurgitate what they read). Each student will speak for approximately five minutes at the beginning of the discussion. **One member of each group must share the above information and analysis with the class through eCollege by midnight the night before your session (please upload this material to the "discussion" part of your chosen week). Please read your peers' discussion questions each week before coming to class.** I will provide further details in class.

Paper (due November 6 at 5:00 pm):

The guidelines for the paper will be distributed in class.

Final Exam (December 11):

The final exam will be cumulative, covering all material for the entire term. Further details will be provided in class.

Attendance and Participation:

This course depends on the active participation of each student, not only in the discussion component but also in lecture. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Part of your discussion grade will also derive from your active participation in discussion sessions. Please see "Absence Policy" below for more details.

Paper Format:

Your paper must be in Times New Roman, 12-point font with one-inch margins and in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx). *Please do not submit any documents in .pdf format.* Please double-space all body text and single-space your endnotes (which should be in Times New Roman, 10-point font). Please use endnotes and not footnotes. We will follow the Chicago Manual of Style for this paper. A copy of *The Chicago Manual of Style* is available for consultation at the Reference Desk at TAMUC Library. I recommend investing in a copy of this book (preferably the 15th or 16th edition) as this is the standard format for scholarship in history and other fields in the United States.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND ACCESS

In this course, we will make extensive use of the eCollege online course system (<https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx>). eCollege is a Learning Management System (LMS) that facilitates instruction through a variety of online tools. For more information and technical

support in using eCollege, please send a message to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or call 1-866-656-5511.

Please find the page for our course within eCollege and navigate to it. You will submit your paper through eCollege and receive instructor feedback through this system. You will also find on eCollege all of the course readings which do not come from the books that you will purchase. We will discuss eCollege and our use of it in more detail in class. **Please submit all written work to the appropriate listing in the Dropbox on the course's eCollege page. (No hard copy submissions, please.)**

For this course, you will need an up-to-date web browser, Microsoft Word (or Open Office), and the free Adobe Acrobat reader (<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Outside of class sessions and office hours, email is the best way to communicate with me. Please use your TAMU Commerce email address in all email communication with me, and put the course name (History 360) in the subject line. Please also keep the following in mind: like all of you, I am a busy member of this University community who must juggle multiple commitments. Please expect a response to your message within 24 hours on a weekday and 48 hours on the weekends. I will not respond to questions whose answer is contained in this syllabus or in another handout that I have distributed.

Writing Center:

Students are encouraged to make use of the University's Writing Center for assistance in composing and revising their papers. If you take advantage of this service, please plan ahead by giving yourself enough time to make an appointment and incorporate their suggestions into your revisions. For more information and to make an appointment, see: <http://web.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx>.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Late Work Policy: The paper is due on November 6 at 5:00 pm to eCollege; you will incur a penalty of one letter grade per day late. This starts from the minute after the deadline (i.e. a paper turned in at 5:10 that was due at 5:00 the same day is counted as being one day late). **No extensions will be granted under any circumstances.**

Absence Policy: Attending every class session is critical for your success in this course. Nonetheless, I am aware that unexpected events sometimes arise that interfere with course responsibilities. **Therefore, each student can take one (1) "free" absence that will not incur any penalty.** Please use this free absence wisely. All absences beyond this free absence will incur progressive deductions from your participation grade. No absences beyond the free one will be "excused" for any reason. Tardiness will also count against your participation grade. **All students with any special needs must see the instructor as soon as possible in the semester**

to discuss this. Failure to address the matter promptly may result in the inability to accommodate a specific circumstance.

Laptop Use: Use of laptops in class is a **privilege**. I reserve the right to revoke this privilege if a student is caught using a laptop for any purpose other than to access the course readings, access e College **for this class**, or take notes related to our course. Cell phones must be turned off and not used at all in class sessions; iPads and other tablets can be used only for the purposes for which laptop use is permissible. Repeated cell phone rings and the like will damage your participation grade.

Grade Appeals: The instructor's judgment of all student grades on exams, essays, and all other graded assignments is final and will not be subject to revision, except when a mathematical error has been committed.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is any act which involves the theft of someone else's ideas. This includes but is not limited to: lifting text out of anyone else's work without proper attribution; using an author's exact words with a citation but without quotation marks to indicate these words; and simply reiterating another's ideas (author, professor, peer, etc) without giving credit to this person. Plagiarism also includes buying or otherwise acquiring material from the Internet and passing it off as your own as well as having a friend (or anyone else) write all or part of your paper. **You are also committing plagiarism if you submit part or all of something that you have written for another assignment—for this or another class—without proper attribution.** Other forms of academic dishonesty include (among other offenses): possessing, using, or distributing illicit examination materials; and forgery.

I have a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of academic dishonesty. Anyone caught plagiarizing or committing any other academic offense will receive a zero on the assignment in question and will be referred to the Dean of Students. The offender may also fail the course. Ignorance is **not** an excuse; it is the responsibility of **all** students to be fully informed about plagiarism and to absolutely avoid it. If you have any doubts as to what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. **All written assignments will be automatically uploaded to turnitin.com for plagiarism checking.**

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

If you require such an accommodation, please contact the above office **as soon as possible in the term.**

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct* from *Student Guide Handbook*). Among other things, this includes exhibiting respectful behavior in class at all times. While I welcome and expect disagreements in viewpoints during our discussions, all students must refrain at all times from making inappropriate or offensive remarks and treat all classmates and the instructor with respect, courtesy, and dignity. Please see the above guidelines if you are unclear about any aspect of acceptable conduct.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week I: Introductions: What is (was) the Atlantic World?

First Meeting, August 28: Introductions

Go over syllabus, course policies, and general expectations.

Discussion, August 30: What is Atlantic history?

Readings:

- Valerie Hansen and Kenneth Curtis, *Voyages in World History*, 1st ed. (2010), chapter 19 (pp 410-431) [22 pp]
- Lara Putnam, "To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 615-630 [16 pp]
- Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Erik Seeman, eds., *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500-2000* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), xvii-xxviii [12 pp]
- AW, xxiii-xxx [8 pp]
- **Total reading: 58 pp**

Week II: Early Explorations and Contacts

Lecture, September 4: Old World Origins of the Atlantic System

Lecture, September 6: Early Explorations of Africa and the "Atlantic Islands"

Readings:

- AW, 6-51, 71-114 [89 pp]
- **Total reading: 89 pp**

Week III: The Spanish Conquests of the Caribbean, Mexico, and Perú

Lecture, September 11: First Contact and the Early Plantation Boom in the Caribbean

Discussion, September 13: The Conquests of Mexico and Perú

Discussion group 1

Readings:

- AW, 124-152 [28 pp]
 - Bernal Díaz, Excerpts from “The True History of the Conquest of New Spain,” in Stuart B. Schwartz, ed., *Victors and Vanquished: Spanish and Nahua Views of the Conquest of Mexico* (Boston: Bedford St Martin’s, 2000), 43-74 [32 pp]
 - Camilla Townsend, “Burying the White Gods: New Perspectives on the Conquest of Mexico,” *American Historical Review* 108, no. 3 (2003): 659-687 [29 pp] (to access, please go to <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/108.3/townsend.html>)
- Total reading: 89 pp**

Week IV: The Spanish Empire: Political and Economic Structure

Lecture, September 18: The Spanish Empire

Discussion, September 20: The Paradox of Silver: Why Did Spain Experience Simultaneous Imperial Power and Economic Decline?

Discussion group 2

Readings:

- AW, 161-207 [46 pp]
- Stanley J. Stein and Barbara H. Stein, “Spain, Europe and the Atlantic System, 1500-1700” in *Silver, Trade, and War: Spain and America in the Making of Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 3-39 [37 pp]
- **Total reading: 83 pp**

Week V: The Latecomers: French Settlement in the Caribbean and North America

Lecture, September 25: The French Empire in the Caribbean

Discussion, September 27: French Settlement in North America: Canada and Louisiana

Discussion group 3

Readings:

- AW, 227-271 [45 pp]
- Shannon Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 139-188 [50 pp]
- **Total reading: 95 pp**

Week VI: The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Lecture, October 2: The Contours and Evolution of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Discussion, October 4: How Did the Atlantic Slave Trade Influence African Political and Economic Development?

Discussion group 4

Readings:

- AW, 326-372 [47 pp]
- AA, 72-97 [26 pp]
- **Total reading: 73 pp**

Week VII: Slavery, I: The Development of the Plantation Complex

Lecture, October 9: The Plantation Complex in the French Empire

Guest lecture by Dr. John Garrigus, Associate Professor of History, University of Texas-Arlington

Discussion, October 11: *Marronnage*, Rebellion, and Other Forms of Resistance

Discussion group 5

Readings:

- AW, 373-419 [47 pp]
- AA, 272-303 [32 pp]
- **Total reading: 79 pp**

Week VIII: Slavery, II: Enslavement and Freedom beyond the Plantation

Lecture, October 16: The Diverse Forms of Slavery in the Americas

October 18: Midterm Exam in Class (covers material through Week VIII)

Readings:

- Brett Rushforth, “A Little Flesh We Offer You: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 4 (2003): 777-808 [32 pp]
- **Total reading: 32 pp**

Week IX: Race, Gender, and Family in Transatlantic Communities

Lecture, October 23: Gender, Honor, and Race-Making in the Spanish Empire

Discussion, October 25: Racial Formation in the French Caribbean

Discussion group 6

Readings:

- AW, 420-464 [45 pp]
- Jennifer L. Palmer, “What’s in a Name? Mixed-Race Families and Resistance to Racial Codification in Eighteenth-Century France,” *French Historical Studies* 33, no. 3 (2010): 357-385 [29 pp]
- **Total reading: 74 pp**

Week X: Africa and the Atlantic World

Lecture, October 30: African Survivals in American Slave Societies

Discussion, November 1: The “Second Best Alternative:” African Limitations on the Slave Trade

Discussion group 7

Readings:

- David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 137-192) [56 pp]
- David Geggus, “The French Slave Trade: An Overview,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (January 2001), 119-138 [20 pp]
- **Total reading: 76 pp**

Week XI: Reform and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century

Lecture, November 6: The Bourbon Reforms and Revolts in Spanish America
Paper Due (5:00 pm)

Discussion, November 8: The Impact of the French Enlightenment on Atlantic Slavery
Discussion group 8

Readings:

- AA, 304-334 [31 pp]
- Laurent Dubois, “An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic,” *Social History* 31, no. 1 (February 2006): 1-14 [14 pp]
- AW, 517-525, 542-565 [33 pp]
- **Total reading: 78 pp**

Week XII: The Haitian Revolution

Lecture, November 13: The Haitian Revolution: A Radical Challenge to Slavery and Racism

Discussion, November 15: Was “Emancipation” in the French Caribbean Liberation or a New Form of Slavery?

Discussion group 9

Readings:

- Ada Ferrer, “Haiti, Free Soil, and Antislavery in the Revolutionary Atlantic,” *American Historical Review* 117, no. 1 (2002): 40-66 [27 pp]
- Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Palgrave, 2006), 7-42 [36 pp]
- Carolyn Fick, “Emancipation in Haiti: From Plantation Labour to Peasant Proprietorship,” *Slavery and Abolition* 21, no. 2 (2000): 11-39 [29 pp]
- **Total reading: 92 pp**

Week XIII: No class; happy Thanksgiving!

Week XIV: The Spanish American Independence Wars

Lecture, November 27: Independence in Mainland Spanish America and Continued Colonial Rule in the Caribbean

November 29: In-class viewing of parts of *The Last Supper* (1976); attendance is mandatory

Readings:

- Brian Hamnett, "Process and Pattern: A Re-Examination of the Ibero-American Independence Movements, 1808-1826," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 29, no. 2 (May 1997): 279-328 [50 pp]
- Matt Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle Against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 21-45 [25 pp]
- **Total reading: 75 pp**

Week XV: Conclusions

Discussion, December 4: Concluding discussion on the French and Spanish Atlantic. For this session, please re-read the Hansen and Curtis, *Voyages in World History* chapter that you read for August 30. As you read, please consider the following: based on what you have learned this semester about Atlantic history, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the Hansen and Curtis chapter? What important details have they omitted, and what inaccuracies or imprecise statements can you identify? If you were an editor for a book who was reading their chapter in order to evaluate its suitability in an edited volume on Atlantic history, what critiques would you give?

Final meeting, December 6: In-class review for final exam; final course evaluations.

Reading:

- Re-read Valerie Hansen and Kenneth Curtis, *Voyages in World History*, 1st ed. (2010), chapter 19 (pp 410-431) [22 pp] (for discussion on December 4)
- **Total reading: 22 pp**

Final exam: December 11, 10:30 AM-12:30 PM