



## HISTORY 265

### THE ATLANTIC IN THE MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD, 1450-1830

**Instructor:** Dr. Graham Nessler

**Class Meets:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30a-10:45a, SS 143

**Office Location:** Ferguson Social Sciences 126

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 3:30-5:30 PM, and Wednesdays, 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

In modern political, social, and scholarly discourse, terms such as “globalization” and “interdependency” are often thrown around to celebrate, denounce, or simply assert the existence of new patterns of travel, communication, and commerce that supposedly represent a sharp break from what has come before. But how did this brave new world originate? How deep are the roots of “globalization”—is it not much older than Facebook, or does it have antecedents dating back to Columbus and earlier? In this course, we will examine the role of the “Atlantic World” in the making of our modern global society, focusing on two of the most important empires in the New World: those of France and Spain. Over 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.

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 assess major political, economic and social developments in the French and Spanish empires.

<b>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>
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### **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*. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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:

- First Exam: 25% of your final grade
- Paper: 25% of your final grade
- Second Exam: 35% of your final grade
- Attendance and Participation: 15% of your final grade

### **Grading Scale:**

A=90-100%

B=80-89%

C=70-79%

D=60-69%

F=59% and below

### **First Exam (March 7):**

The first exam will cover all material from the beginning of the term through Week VIII. You will need a blank Scantron. Please see below for exam make-up policy.

### **Paper (due April 2 at 5:00 pm):**

The guidelines for the paper will be distributed in class.

### **Second Exam (May 2):**

The second and last exam for the course will cover all the material from the first exam to the end of the course (that is, it is **non-cumulative**). You will need to bring a pencil and a blank Scantron to the second exam.

### **Comprehensive Make-Up Exam:**

This is **ONLY** for those students who have missed one of the two regular exams for a legitimate, documented reason. It will be given during finals week (date and time TBD), and it will be comprehensive (i.e., it covers the **entire course** from Week I to the end). If you have a **legitimate reason** for missing an exam (e.g. severe illness or injury *requiring professional medical care*, emergencies in your *immediate* family, participation in *official* university activities, legal obligations that cannot be rescheduled) **AND** you have **supporting documentation** for your absence, then you may **request** to take the comprehensive make-up exam.

Requests for taking the make-up exam must be **submitted in writing and include documentation** explaining and substantiating why the absence was legitimate. Such a request and supporting documentation must be submitted within three (3) days of the scheduled exam date for the exam that you missed. An approval to take the make-up exam will be based solely upon the professor's evaluation of your request and supporting documentation. Your grade on the make-up exam may **only** be used to substitute **one** missed exam. Any other missed exams will receive 0% scores, irrespective of the circumstances.

### **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. Please see "Absence Policy" below for more details on attendance.

Part of your discussion grade will also derive from your active participation in discussion sessions; consistently making informed comments and asking thoughtful questions is the key to doing well in the discussion component of the course. Finally, each student will sign up to offer one (1) discussion question to the rest of the class on the readings for one of the weeks marked "discussion group" below. There will be several students per week, each of whom must offer one different discussion question that **does not merely summarize the readings**, but rather seeks to provoke intelligent, thoughtful debate based on an informed understanding of the week's material. A question such as, "What does John Thornton argue about African slavery?" is not sufficient; a much more effective question is: "Might John Thornton exaggerate the differences between African and European law in shaping Atlantic slavery?"

Once you sign up for a group, you **CANNOT** change groups, so please choose your group wisely. "Caps" per group will be based on course enrollment. I will give more details in class.

### **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). You may use either footnotes or endnotes. 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 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 your paper to the appropriate listing in the DROPBOX (NOT Doc Sharing) on the course's eCollege page. (No hard copy submissions, please.) Please submit only ONE (1) copy of your completed paper to the Dropbox.**

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 265) 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. I will try my best to respond to all student email messages 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 (if you send such an email, I will simply send you a reply with "LACS," or Look at Course Syllabus).

Note: it is your responsibility to **check your University email regularly (at least once a day during the week)**. Sometimes I may send you an important and time-sensitive message by email that I may not send you through any other medium. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly and to respond to such messages (and complete the relevant tasks) in a timely manner.

### **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.tamu->

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### Course Specific Procedures:

*Late Work Policy:* The paper is due on April 2 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). Papers submitted more than four (4) days after the deadline will not be accepted **and will receive a score of 0. No extensions will be granted under any circumstances.**

*Exam Make-Up Policy:* As stated above, the ONLY circumstances under which you may make up an exam are: if you miss the first or second exam due to a legitimate reason AND provide me with supporting documentation and a written request to take the comprehensive make-up exam within three (3) days of the scheduled date of the missed exam. No documentation, no make-up, no exceptions. As stated above, you will only be able to make up no more than one (1) exam in this way, and granting or refusal of all requests to take the comprehensive make-up exam is at the sole discretion of the instructor. If you miss the make-up exam for ANY reason, there will be no opportunities to make it up.

*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, irrespective of the circumstances. 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:* No laptops, tablets, or other electronic devices are permitted in class. I reserve the right to ask a student to leave if his or her laptop, tablet, etc. is visible or if his/her cell phone or other electronic device disrupts our learning environment.

*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 or recording 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 may 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](mailto: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.

<b>COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR</b>
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### **Week I: Introductions: What is (was) the Atlantic World?**

First Meeting, January 15: Introductions

Go over syllabus, course policies, and general expectations.

Discussion, January 17: What is Atlantic history?

Readings:

- Valerie Hansen and Kenneth Curtis, *Voyages in World History*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (2010), chapter 19 (pp 410-431) [22 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: 42 pp**

## **Week II: Early Explorations and Contacts**

Lecture, January 22: Old World Origins of the Atlantic System

Lecture, January 24: Early Explorations of Africa and the “Atlantic Islands”

Readings:

- AW, 6-51 [46 pp]
- **Total reading: 46 pp**

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

Lecture, January 29: First Contact and the Early Plantation Boom in the Caribbean

Discussion, January 31: The Conquests of Mexico and Perú

### **Discussion group 1**

Readings:

- AW, 124-152 [28 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]
- Total reading: 57 pp**

## **Week IV: The Spanish Empire: Political and Economic Structure**

Lecture, February 5: The Spanish Empire

Discussion, February 7: 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, February 12: The French Empire in the Caribbean

Discussion, February 14: French Settlement in North America: Canada and Louisiana

### **Discussion group 3**

Readings:

- AW, 227-271 [45 pp]
- **Total reading: 45 pp**

## **Week VI: The Transatlantic Slave Trade**

Lecture, February 19: The Contours and Evolution of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Discussion, February 21: 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: The Development of the Plantation Complex**

Lecture, February 26: The Plantation Complex in the French Empire

Discussion, February 28: *Marronnage*, Rebellion, and Other Forms of Resistance; in-class viewing of parts of *The Last Supper* (1976)

### **Discussion group 5**

Readings:

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

## **Week VIII: First Exam**

Lecture, March 5: In-class exam review

### **March 7: First Exam in Class (covers material through Week VIII)**

Readings:

- No readings; just focus on studying for the exam.

**Week IX: No class on March 12-14 (Spring Break).**

## **Week X: Race, Gender, and Family in Transatlantic Communities**

Lecture, March 19: Gender, Honor, and Race-Making in the Spanish Empire

Discussion, March 21: 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 XI: Africa and the Atlantic World**

Lecture, March 26: African Survivals in American Slave Societies

Discussion, March 28: 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]
- **Total reading: 56 pp**

## **Week XII: Reform and Revolution in the Eighteenth Century**

Lecture, April 2: The Bourbon Reforms and Revolts in Spanish America

*Paper Due (5:00 pm)*

Discussion, April 4: The Impact of the French Enlightenment on Atlantic Slavery

### **Discussion group 8**

Readings:

- AA, 304-334 [31 pp]
- AW, 517-525, 542-565 [33 pp]
- **Total reading: 64 pp**

## **Week XIII: The Haitian Revolution**

Lecture, April 9: The Haitian Revolution: A Radical Challenge to Slavery and Racism

Discussion, April 11: 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]
- **Total reading: 63 pp**

#### **Week XIV: The Spanish American Independence Wars**

Lecture, April 16: Independence in Mainland Spanish America and Continued Colonial Rule in the Caribbean

April 18: Discussion of independence wars in Spanish America (no discussion group this week)

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]
- **Total reading: 50 pp**

#### **Week XV: Final Discussion and Exam Review**

April 23: 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 the first week of class. 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?

April 25: In-Class Review for Second Exam

Reading:

- Re-read Valerie Hansen and Kenneth Curtis, *Voyages in World History*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. (2010), chapter 19 (pp 410-431) [22 pp] (for discussion on April 23)
- **Total reading: 22 pp**

#### **Week XVI: Conclusions**

April 30: NO CLASS: study day

**May 2: Second exam in class (covers material SINCE first exam)**