The Atlantic World

Between the 15th and early 19th centuries, the many societies of the multiethnic and polyglot basin encompassing the New World and the Old came into sustained contact. The resulting “Atlantic World” is often considered a prototype of contemporary globalization—for good and for ill. In this seminar we will investigate that understanding through discussions based on readings and reports drawn from original sources and exciting recent scholarship. What were the characteristics of the Atlantic civilization(s) that came into existence during the tumultuous early modern centuries? What goals, attitudes, and policies motivated the diverse groups of Africans, Europeans, and Native Americans that willingly and unwillingly, peacefully and aggressively, encountered one another throughout the Atlantic? How did migrants—forced and free—contribute to the new societies they forged? What kinds of political orders, cultural identities, and economic bonds developed in consequence of intense transatlantic exchanges?

The requirements for the course include:
1) Regular, on-time attendance in class.
2) Informed and consistent participation in the weekly discussions.
3) A report (length: 1500 words; i.e., 5-6 typed pages), due at the beginning of class on either 15 September or 22 September. A fuller explanation of the assignment will be posted separately on Blackboard.
4) An essay of about 1500 words (5-6 typed pages) due at the beginning of class on 3 November. A separate posting will give full details.
5) A final paper, on a subject chosen in consultation with the instructor, of about 15 pages (4000-4500 words), due at 5 p.m. on Friday, 19 December. Summaries of these papers will be delivered in seminar on 1 December.
6) A final examination to be scheduled by the Registrar.

The history department has implemented the following draconian policy on attendance: Students are required to attend all classes for the successful completion of the course. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

During our first meeting, we shall consider conceptual and historiographical issues, discuss paper writing, and organize the seminar. Thereafter, we shall alternate weeks when discussions will be based entirely on common reading with weeks when discussions will be based both on common reading and student reports. Each class except the first and the last will be facilitated by two students who will be responsible for conducting discussions.
Every student should buy the following paperbacks:

James Axtell, Natives and Newcomers. The Cultural Origins of North America
Philip Curtin, The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Essays in Atlantic History
Jean De Léry, History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil
Robert Harms, The Diligent. A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade

Strongly suggested:
MLA Handbook, 5th edition

Some of the readings will be in electronic reserves, accessed through Blackboard on the web; a brief guide to using Blackboard will be distributed separately. Others will be accessed directly through their stable URLs.

This course, like any other, is premised on mutual respect and honesty. Thus I expect that the work you submit is your own. Plagiarism will be severely penalized: any work containing plagiarized material will be granted the grade of no credit and may subject you to prosecution before the CJC. In order to clarify the issue of academic honesty, I will distribute copies of the History Department's guidelines. When in doubt, check with me.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. (1 September) What was the Atlantic World?
   Reading:
   David Armitage, “Three Concepts of Atlantic History” (Blackboard)
   Thornton, Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, chap. 1
   Suggested: Paul Butel, The Atlantic, Introduction and chaps. 1 and 2 (Blackboard)
   Thinking:
   Think about how you would conceptualize the “Atlantic world.”
   Think about and be prepared to discuss two substantive issues that you would consider central to an understanding of the history of the Atlantic world from the 15th through the early 19th centuries.

2. (8 September) An Early European Perception of the Americas and Americans
   Reading:
   De Léry, History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil
3. (15 September) Is Léry Reliable? Comparing Perceptions of the Americas and Americans
Reading:
   J. H. Elliott, Spain and Its World 1500-1700, chap. III, “The Discovery of America and the Discovery of Man” (Blackboard)
   Olive Dickason, The Myth of the Savage, chaps. 1-4 (Blackboard)
REPORTS DUE: see #3, above

4. (22 September) Early Observers of Africa
Reading:
   William Cohen, The French Encounter with Africans, chaps. 1 and 3 (Blackboard)
REPORTS DUE: see #3, above
   Suggestion: Begin reading Harms, The Diligent for next week

5. (29 September) Slaving
Reading:
   Harms, The Diligent

6. (6 October) Slaving’s Effects on Africa
Reading:
   Curtin, Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex, chaps. 1-3, 9-10
   Thornton, Africa and Africans, Introduction and chaps. 2-4
   Martin Klein, “The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on the Societies of the Western Sudan” (Blackboard)
   Patrick Manning, “Contours of Slavery and Social Change in Africa” Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8762%28198310%2988%3A4%3C835%3ACOSASC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W)

OCTOBER HOLIDAY

7. (20 October) Slavery’s Effects on the Americas
Reading:
   Thornton, Africa and Africans, chaps. 5-9, 11
   Curtin, Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex, chaps. 4-8
   Philip Morgan, “The Cultural Implications of the Atlantic Slave Trade” (Blackboard)
   Philip Morgan, “British Encounters with Africans and African-Americans, circa 1600-1780” (Blackboard)

8. (27 October) The Indians’ New World
Reading:
   Axtell, Natives and Newcomers
9. (3 November) A New World for Indians?
   Reading:
   Neal Salisbury, “The Indians’ Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans” Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28199607%293%3A53%3A3C435%3ATIOWNA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R
   **ESSAYS DUE:** see #4, above

10. (10 November) Experiencing the Atlantic World
    Reading:
    Equiano, *Narrative of the Life*

11. (17 November) Long-Distance Interchange
    Reading:
    Choice from additional assignment sheet (Blackboard)

12. (24 November) Resistance and Revolution: the end of the first Atlantic world
    Reading:
    Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, chap. 10
    Curtin, *Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, chaps. 11-14 and Retrospect
    Mullin, “Slave Resistance in an Era of War and Revolution” (Blackboard)
    Jack P. Greene, “The American Revolution” (Blackboard)
    Franklin W. Knight, “The Haitian Revolution” (Blackboard)
    Jaime E. Rodríquez O., “The Emancipation of America” (Blackboard)
    Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, “The Many-Headed Hydra” (Blackboard)

13. (1 December) **Student reports:** see #5, above

**TBA. Final Examination:** see #6, above.

19 December **FINAL PAPERS DUE:** see #5, above