



## Topics in Atlantic History, 1450-1850

HIS 317W/417

Wed. 2:00-4:40 pm

Rush Rhees 456

Office Hours: Monday 1:00-3:00 pm or by appt.

Prof. Michael Jarvis

Office: Rush Rhees 455

Phone 275-4558

Michael.Jarvis@rochester.edu

**Overview:** What is Atlantic History and how has it changed, challenged, and reinvigorated American, European, Latin American, and African history in recent years? This readings course introduces students to Atlantic History and Atlantic World Studies and surveys recent works in this emerging new field. Because Atlantic approaches are inherently comparative, connective, transnational, transcultural, and transregional, history majors can define this course as American, European, oceanic, or non-Western, depending on their research paper topic choice. Within the broad array of Atlantic studies, we will particularly focus on movements and circulations of things and peoples and the trans- and circum-Atlantic networks they create.

This is an intensive research seminar. It carries a heavy reading load and will demand much from you in terms of writing and class discussions. A basic working knowledge especially of early American or early modern European history is especially useful. If you need a general primer or refresher on early American history, I recommend or Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York, 2001) or Karen Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History* (2012).

In addition to learning about the early modern Atlantic World, this course will introduce you to the research methods historians use to identify subjects and areas worthy of study, gather evidence to answer research questions, wrestle with biases and interpretations of primary sources, and compose an engaging and relevant narrative about the past. You will also improve your writing and critical thinking skills by writing two historiographic papers summarizing and critiquing the books and articles we read. The course will culminate in your presenting your research findings to your peers and fielding questions on your topic at the end of the semester.

**Class Participation:** You are expected to attend every class, read the assigned material, and come prepared to talk about what you have read. Since seminars are by nature designed to be question-driven, you will be expected to think on your feet, frame historical questions, and critically evaluate the scholarly works we will read. In contributing to discussion, quality is more appreciated than quantity. If you are not speaking up in class, I will assume you are unprepared (rather than brilliant but shy). Your class participation grade is worth twenty percent (20%) of your grade. Unexcused absences will cause this grade to suffer.

**Presentations:** In weeks 3-7 and 9-14, one of you will lead seminar discussion. As moderator, you should concentrate on articulating the broad themes, important contributions, and methodological innovations in the required works we've read and strive to make links with supplementary titles where possible. You should meet with me during office hours (Monday afternoon) before the class you lead to go over teaching strategies. Your performance will form part of your class participation grade.

**Written Assignments:** The rest of your grade will vary base on whether you are signed up for HIS 317W (undergraduate) or HIS 417 (graduate) credit. HIS 317W students will write 7 critical reaction papers on weekly readings (20%, see below) and a summary and critique of the book they select for Week 7, due at the start of class that day (10%), and work leading to your final research paper (50%, also see below). HIS 417 students will write two critical review historiography papers (30%) and a final research paper or comprehensive exam field essay (50%).

**HIS 317W: Critical Reaction Papers** (30% total): On weeks 3-6, 8, and 10-12, you will write a single-spaced, single-page critical reaction paper addressing the assigned reading, due at the beginning of the class in which the readings are discussed. These papers should succinctly summarize the issues that each author addresses and evaluate the persuasiveness of arguments and evidence. Reaction essays turned in late on the day of class will be marked down half a grade, and for each day late thereafter another half-

grade will be deducted, so have your papers ready on time! Given the intensity of this course, I will allow you to skip turning in TWO reaction papers during the semester, but this does not absolve you from doing the reading and participating in discussion. The SEVEN reaction papers you turn in over the course of the semester will constitute 20% of your grade.

**Short Review Paper:** Due in class on February 27, you will write a 4-6 page (double-spaced) summary and review on one of the Atlantic Things books (Week 7) and discuss how it connects with approaches, themes, topics, and places we've previously covered in the class. It is worth 10% of your grade.

**HIS 417: Critical Review Essays** (15% each): You will write two critical review essays (12 to 15 pages, double-spaced) that address a particular week's required readings and two additional monographs. Your essay should summarize the thesis and main points of each reading, discuss how they relate to each other, and ideally consider their strengths and/or shortcomings and new questions or perspectives they raise. I assess grades based on quality and clarity of writing as well as content. Essays are due at the start of class on the weeks you choose to review. Your essays should cover a set of readings in weeks 3-7 and then in weeks 9-14. You may rewrite review essays, but all revised work must be submitted by May 1.

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER:** You will also write one long (15-20 pages for 317W. 20-25 pages for 417) paper that explores a specific subject or relevant theme relating to Atlantic history or that assumes an Atlantic perspective using mainly primary sources or a substantial collection of documents and contextual secondary material. Primary sources may include archaeological evidence, historic buildings or sites, maps, paintings and images, and songs and folklore as well as written documents. The success of your paper will depend on your ability to conduct research independently, analyze documents, and creatively write up your findings.

Heeding the observation of Poor Richard (Benjamin Franklin) that "Little strokes fell great Oaks," 317W students and 417 students choosing the research paper option will follow the schedule below to incrementally develop your paper:

**By Feb. 13** - Schedule an individual meeting with me to register your topic.

**March 6** - submit a 1-2 page proposal and annotated bibliography

**March 27** - submit a detailed outline and a status report of your completed and outstanding research

**April 17** - draft due. **This should be a full, polished draft with complete citations and bibliography. It is NOT a "rough draft." It will be graded with the same rigor as a final paper. Sloppy or incomplete papers will be marked down accordingly.**

**Week of April 24** - schedule an individual meeting with me to collect your evaluated draft and discuss ways to further improve your work.

**May 1** - final revised paper due, with no exceptions.

Collectively, your research paper is worth fifty percent (50%) of your grade but the steps in the developmental process will be weighted as follows: proposal/bibliography (5%), outline/status report (5%), first draft (10%), final paper (30%). **Late submissions will be penalized a grade per day**, so it is imperative that you work steadily throughout the semester and submit complete and polished assignments on schedule.

**U. of R. Writing Center:** As you review and research papers over the course of the semester, you are certainly allowed and very much encouraged to work with writing tutors and specialists in the College Writing Center (<http://writing.rochester.edu/center.html>, Rush Rhees G-121). They will help you to improve your prose and organization and can serve as ideal readers/sounding boards as you develop your research projects. As a fortune cookie I once opened stated, “Good writing is clear thinking made visible.” The writing center staff can help you to achieve this B if you work with them.

**Rush Rhees Research Librarians:** You are also encouraged to consult Margaret Becket and Alan Unsworth early and often while developing your research paper. Margaret is a specialist in U.S. and Canadian sources, while Alan handles the rest of the world (including Great Britain) but their expertise overlaps geographically as well. They can help you at all stages of the research project, especially in finding relevant source materials. You can contact them via the Reference Desk or by email/phone: [mbecket@library.rochester.edu](mailto:mbecket@library.rochester.edu)/x59300 or [aunsworth@library.rochester.edu](mailto:aunsworth@library.rochester.edu)/ x59298.

**Technology Failures:** I find it funny how often hard drives crash right before scheduled tests and paper due dates. I am actually quite handy at data recovery (laptops and desktops). In order to get an excused extension in the event of your suffering a catastrophic computer failure, please bring your afflicted computer to my office so that I can attempt to recover your lost files or, if I can't, we can work out a reasonable extension timetable.

#### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Philip Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (1992)

J.H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World* (New Haven, 2006)

Jack Greene and Philip Morgan, *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford, 2009)

Linda Heywood and John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas* (2007)

Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World* (2009)

Jill Lepore, *New York Burning* (2006)

Jane Merritt, *At The Crossroads: Indians & Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier* (2003)

Peter Pope, *Fish into Wine* (2004),

Jan Rogozinski *A Brief History of the Caribbean* (2008)

Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of A Ship* (2007)

**Besides the above books, there are numerous required articles, chapters, and excerpts for you to read on electronic reserve. Access these on an e-version of this**

syllabus on the Blackboard course website on your my.rochester.edu course interface.

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Karen Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History* (2012)

Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures* (2010)

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

Key to Reading Assignments: \*/\*\* = Required Reading

**Week I (Jan. 16) – Introducing the Course: Atlantic Worlds, Atlantic Historians**

Besides going over class assignments and goals, we will go over electronic research resources and visit the Library Stacks and Special Collections Department

**Week II (Jan. 23) – Atlantic History: Themes and Approaches**

\* Alison Games, “Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities”

*American Historical Review* 111 (2006), 741-757

\* Jack Greene and Philip Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford, 2009), 3-51, 337-356

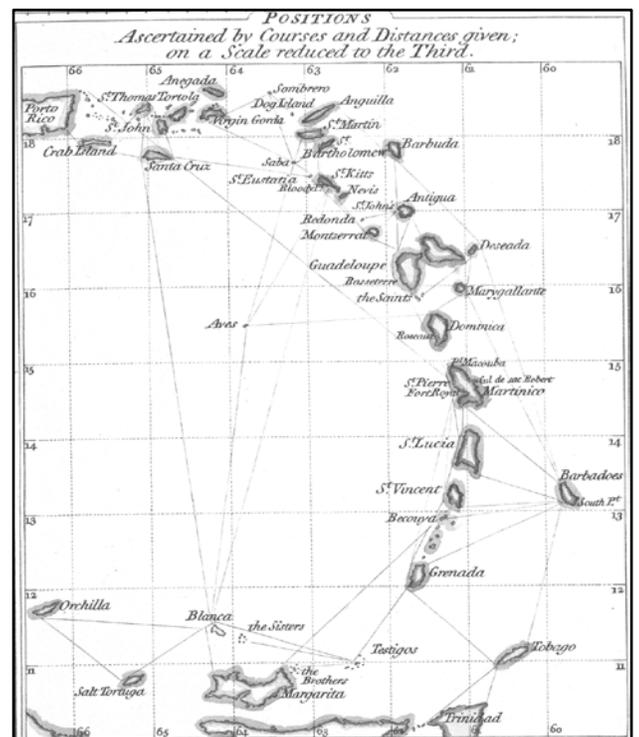
\* Michael Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade* (2009), 1-9

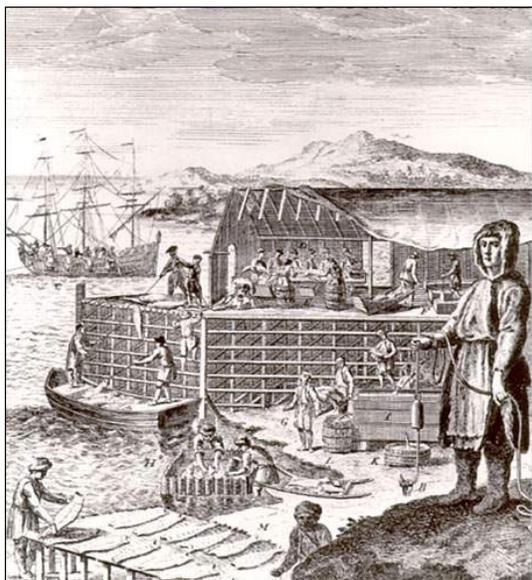
**Week III (Jan. 30) – Atlantic Places: The Caribbean**

\*\* Philip Morgan, “The Caribbean Environment in the Early Modern Era” (unpublished essay, Harvard Atlantic History Seminar)

\*\* Jan Rogozinski *A Brief History of the Caribbean* (2008)

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) OR Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 2) Susan Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges* (2009) OR Kristin Block, *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean* (2012)





**Week IV (Feb. 6) – Atlantic Places: Islands**

\*\* Peter Pope, *Fish into Wine* (2004), all  
 \*\* Michael Jarvis, *Eye of All Trade*, 64-118

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) Thomas Bentley, *Atlantic Islands: Madeira, the Azores, and Cape Verde in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Commerce and Navigation* (1972), 2) Larry Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted* (2003) OR Michael Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade* (2009)

**Week V (Feb. 13) – Atlantic Places: Plantations**

THIS WEEK: meet with me individually to discuss potential paper topics

\*\* Philip Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (1992)

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) Peter Wood, *Black Majority* (1974), 2) S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina* (2006)



### Week VI (Feb. 20) – Atlantic Empires

\*\* J.R. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, to pp. 251

\*\* Eliga Gould, “Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds,” *Am Hist Rev* 112:764-86 (2007)

\*\* French, Dutch, British & Portuguese Atlantic World essays in Greene and Morgan, *Atlantic History*, 81-187.

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All The World* (1995), 2) Christian Koot, *Empire at the Periphery* (2011)

### Week VII (Feb. 27) – Atlantic Things and the Networks they Create

**SIGN UP** to report on and review one of the following books:

Jennifer Anderson, *Mahogany* (2012)

Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana* (2001)

David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine* (2009)

Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (1998)

J.R. McNeill, *Mosquito Empires* (2010)

Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power* (1986)

Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures* (2010)

Mark Pendergrast, *Uncommon Grounds: A History of Coffee* (2000)

Tom Standage, *A History of the World in Six Glasses* (2006)



### Week VIII (March 6) – Atlantic People: Native Americans

#### PAPER PROPOSAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

\* James Merrell, “The Indians’ New World: The Catawba Experience,” *WMQ* 41 (1984): 537-565

\* Jane Merritt, *At The Crossroads: Indians & Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier* (2003)

\* Amy Bushnell, “Indigenous America and the Limits of the Atlantic World, 1493-1825,” and Peter Wood, “From Atlantic History to a Continental Approach,” in Greene and Morgan, *Atlantic History*, 191-221, 279-298

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) Neal Salisbury, “The Indians’ Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans,” *WMQ* 53 (1996): 435-458, 2) James Axtell, *The Invasion Within* (1985), 3) Daniel Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (2001) OR Charles Mann, *1491* (2006)

**Week IX (March 13): SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**



**Week X (March 20) – Atlantic Africa**

\*\* Ira Berlin, “From Creole to African,” *WMQ* 53 (1996): 251-88

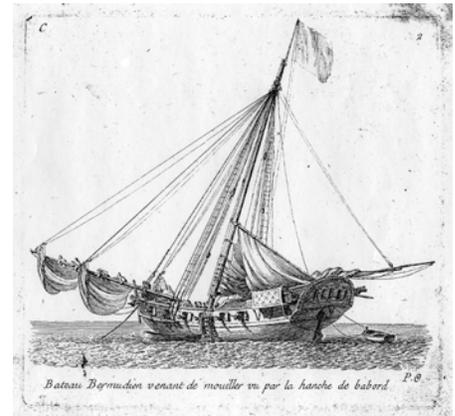
\*\* Linda Heywood and John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas* (2007)

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) Donald Wright, *The World and a Very Small Place in Africa* (rev. 2010) OR 2) Herbert Klein, *The African Slave Trade* (rev. 2010) 2) Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks* (1998) OR Randy Sparks, *Two Princes of Calabar: An 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Atlantic Odyssey* (2009)

**Week XI (March 27) – Atlantic Connectors: Ships and Sailors**

PAPER OUTLINE AND STATUS REPORT DUE

**\*W. Jeffrey Bolster, “Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500–1800,”** *Am Hist Rev* 113 (2008), 19-47



\*\* Alex Roland, W. Jeffrey Bolster, and Alexander Keyssar, *The Way of A Ship* (2007)

\*\* Julius Scott, “Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century,” in Paquette and Engerman, eds., *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion* (Gainesville, 1997), 128-43

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks* (1997), 2) Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea* (2007)

### **Week XII (April 3) – Seaports**

\*\* Jill Lepore, *New York Burning* (2006)

\*\* Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 174-210

\*\* Mark Peterson and Trevor Burnard: “Third Way Lost: The City-States of Boston and Kingston” (unpublished conference paper, Huntington Library, 2012)

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (1986), 2) Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire* (1997) OR Thomas Doerflinger, *A Vigorous Spirit of Enterprise* (2001)

### **Week XIII (April 10) – Atlantic Revolutions**

\*\* J.R. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 255-411

\*\* Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World* (2009)

**HIS 417 Review:** 1) R.R. Palmer, *Age of the Democratic Revolution* (1969) 2) Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World* (2005) OR Jeffrey Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (2009) OR Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty’s Exiles* (2012)

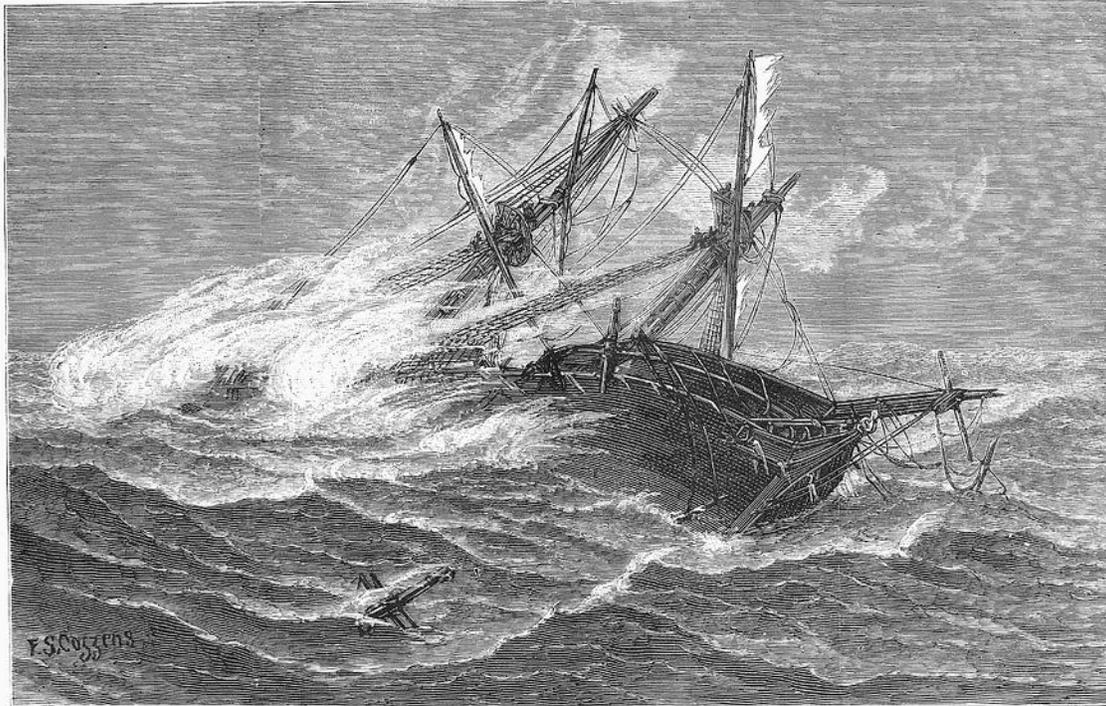
### **Week XIV (April 17) – NO CLASS RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

**Week XV (April 24) – NO CLASS  
MEET WITH ME TO COLLECT AND DISCUSS YOUR PAPERS**

**Week XVI (May 1) –  
FINAL THOUGHTS AND PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH**

**Monday May 6 – Revised Research Papers DUE by NOON**

KEEP WORKING STEADILY THROUGH THE SEMESTER, LEST THIS HAPPEN  
TO YOU...



THE FATAL OCTOBER GALE.— THE SHIP "A. S. DAVIS" RUNNING ASHORE EIGHT MILES SOUTH OF CAVE HENRY, ON OCTOBER 23D.— FROM INFORMATION FURNISHED BY THE SOLE SURVIVOR.