

Prof. Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva

Thursdays 2:00-4:40 pm, Rush Rhees 456

Office Hours: Rush Rhees 458, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11am-12 pm

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Overview

What is Atlantic History? Who are its protagonists? Are there boundaries to a field of study that is supposed to encompass an ocean and three continents? How are we to responsibly study the Atlantic world, its people, languages, beliefs, and practices?

This seminar explores key concepts such as “Atlantic creoles” and the “Iberian Atlantic” in light of recent studies on Lusophone merchants, African healers, Native American sailors and pirates of all backgrounds. A focus on unconventional figures will open new perspectives on the construction of difference and power in the Atlantic setting. By decentering historical narratives focused on the nation-state (Mexico, Brazil, U.S., Haiti, Angola, etc.) or empire (English colonies, French Antilles, Spanish America, etc.) this course invites us to analyze cultural and material exchanges, ideological commonalities and differences that emerged across and (often in spite of) imperial ambitions. The circulation of trade items, foods and luxury goods (e.g., chocolate and pearls) will inform our understanding of this expansive, contested region between 1500 and 1800. As a reading- and writing-intensive course, this seminar is recommended for advanced undergraduates and graduate students. All participants in the course will develop an extensive research paper on a topic of their choice throughout the semester. This paper will be revised and resubmitted during the second half of the semester. This course fulfills the “W” requirement for the History major.

The course is divided into five thematic units. The first is an introductory exploration of the theories and frameworks that historians have devised to define Atlantic history. The second unit addresses how Native Americans devised specific social, political and commercial networks to engage Europeans and Africans from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries. A similar chronology will inform the third unit for the course, although this unit will focus on questions that inform our understanding of Black diasporic histories in the Caribbean and coastal Americas. The fourth unit will focus on material culture through the history of pearls, chocolate, tobacco, textiles and smuggled material of all kinds. As commodities and markers of social status, these objects will allow us to trace cultural exchanges between Africa, Europe and the Americas. Our fifth unit is centered on your research and the revision process.

Expectations

You are expected to read one monograph per week or the equivalent of three scholarly articles. Your participation grade for the semester hinges on completing and analyzing these readings. I urge you to NOT accept what you read, but to critique, question, and challenge each text on the strength of its evidence. The success of this course truly depends on your preparation *before each session* along with your active participation in class. Write questions as you read the assigned material, keep note of the specific pages you want to highlight in discussion. If you’ve bought the book, write in the margins (that’s what they’re for!). Ultimately, I expect you to engage in meaningful dialogue throughout the class. All written assignments for the semester are due at the start of class (2 pm) on Thursdays. This is by design and will allow me to provide you feedback in timely fashion. Late papers will be penalized, so please abide by the deadlines.

Required Books

Brown, Ras Michael. *African Atlantic Cultures and the South Carolina Lowcountry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Cromwell, Jesse. *The Smuggler's World: Illicit Trade and Atlantic Communities in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Dubcovsky, Alejandra. *Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Fuentes, Marisa. *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence and the Archive*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

Gómez, Pablo F. *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Metcalfe, Alida C. *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.

Norton, Marcy. *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

van Deusen, Nancy. *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2015.

Warsh, Molly. *American Baroque: Pearls and the Nature of Empire, 1492-1700*. Williamsburg: Omohundro Institute, 2018.

Course Policies

In accordance with the College credit hour policy, which awards 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week, students are expected to devote at least one hour each week identifying the main lines or argument in course readings, working alone or in groups. In this particular course this might require attending lectures, film screenings or other academic events related to the seminar.

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

This is a DACA/Undocu-friendly course. The UofR and I are committed to full inclusion in education for all persons. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students with temporary and permanent disabilities, to students with DACA or undocumented status, to students facing mental health issues, other personal situations, and to students with other kinds of learning needs. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class or if I can connect you to University resources. For more information see the Burgett Intercultural Center's page: <https://www.rochester.edu/college/bic/support-inclusion/international-students.html#Undocumented>

Academic Honesty

The AS&E Academic Honesty Policy, in parallel to the College Statement of Communal Principles, recognizes our shared obligation to promote honesty and the related principles of respect and responsibility among all members of our institution. It establishes high standards of academic conduct, and requires that each individual meet those standards. All members of the College community further understand that adherence to our shared expectations for integrity requires not only clear communication about those expectations, but the individual and collective courage to uphold them.

As a writing-intensive seminar, there are no midterm or final examinations in this course. However, in your writing assignments you must be especially diligent in crediting the works, thoughts and concepts of other scholars. Students can avoid the risk of plagiarism in written work or oral presentations by clearly indicating the source of any idea or wording that they did not produce, either in footnotes or in the paper or presentation itself, and in a list of references (e.g., bibliography or works cited page). Sources must be given regardless of whether the idea, phrase or other material is quoted directly, paraphrased or summarized in the student-writer's own words. Direct quotes must always be placed in quotation marks in addition to the other citation information that is required. If ever in doubt, please see AS&E's full Academic Honesty Policy: <https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/policy.html>

Book Review (10%)

During the first half of the semester you will write a six-page or eight-page book review, double-spaced, on the three selections for Week 3, 4, and 5 readings. This is not to be a summary of these titles. Your task is to put the three books in conversation with one another and evaluate their arguments comparatively. I will provide a sample review for you to consider.

- review 10% - due Thursday, Sept. 23 at the start of class.

Research Paper (60%)

Throughout the semester, you will produce an extensive research paper on a topic of your choice. Prior to committing to a specific topic we will have individual meetings to discuss the viability of your project. Students enrolled in HIS 386W will complete a 20 page paper (excluding the bibliography). Graduate students in HIS 486 will produce a 25-30 page paper. Although not required, you are more than encouraged to use your foreign language abilities (Portuguese, French, Spanish, Dutch, etc.) to advance your project. This may require requesting InterLibrary Loan materials well ahead of time, so be sure to begin this process early on. The research component will be divided into three sections (an abstract and annotated outline, first version and final version of the paper).

- abstract and annotated bibliography 10% - due Thursday, Oct. 21
- first version of research paper 20% - due Thursday, Nov. 18
- final version of research paper 30% - due Thursday, Dec. 9

Participation and Attendance (20%)

Participation and attendance are crucial elements of this seminar and are worth 20% of your final grade. This requires coming to class prepared with notes on the assigned text(s) of the week and contributing comments, criticisms and questions. Unexcused absences will lower your attendance grade by 10%. In the event of any absence – excused or unexcused – please notify me in order to adjust class discussion and other activities accordingly.

Moreover, each student will lead two class discussions. This will require you to prepare questions, critiques and points for discussion. Tell us about the author's trajectory: where did they study, what else have they published, have they announced their current research interests? Do your best to situate the author's study in relation to their larger body of work. How you divide the reading material or approach class discussion is entirely up to you.

In-Class Presentation (10%)

This 15-20 minute presentation is meant to allow you to present the original research you have been conducting. Prepare an audiovisual presentation with no more than 10 slides. Address the central question that is driving your research and present your evidence. This is not a final presentation, but an opportunity to obtain feedback from the seminar. Include a slide on pressing questions or difficulties you have encountered in the research process. All of us will participate in a Q&A after your presentation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings marked with an asterisk * have been posted to Course Material on Blackboard

Readings marked with (LW) are available on the UofR library website

PART I – Atlantic Theories

Week 1 – Aug. 26

Philip Morgan and Jack Greene, “The Present State of Atlantic History,” in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, 3-33 (LW)

Week 2 – Sept. 2

Choose three of the four listed below, come ready to discuss:

Amy Bushnell Turner, “Indigenous America and the Limits of the Atlantic World,” in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal*, 191-221 (LW)

Francisco Bethencourt, “The Iberian Atlantic: Ties, Networks and Boundaries,” in *Theorising the Iberian Atlantic*, 15-36 (LW)

Ira Berlin, “From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (Apr. 1996): 251-288*

Toby Greene, “Beyond an Imperial Atlantic: Trajectories of Africans from Upper Guinea and West Central Africa in the Early Atlantic World” *Past and Present*, no. 230 (Feb. 2016): 91-122*

PART II – Native American Networks

Week 3 – Sept. 9

Van Deusen, *Global Indios*

Week 4 – Sept. 16

Metcalf, *Go-Betweens*

Week 5 – Sept. 23

Dubcovsky, *Informed Power*

Book review on Weeks 2, 3, and 4 – due 9/23 at 2 pm

- 6 pages (double-spaced) for HIST 386W/AAAS 352 credit
- 8 pages (double-spaced) for HIST 486 credit

PART III – Black Atlantic Queries

Week 6 – Sept. 30

Brown, *African Atlantic Cultures*

Week 7 – Oct. 7

Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*

Week 8 – Oct. 14

Gómez, *Experiential Caribbean*

Week 9 – Oct. 21

Heywood, “The Angolan-Afro-Brazilian cultural connections”

Fromont, “Common Threads: Cloth, Colour and the Slave Trade...”

Abstract and annotated bibliography due on 10/21 at 2pm

- 4-6 pages (single-spaced)
- print two hard copies, bring to class

PART IV – Material Atlantic

Week 10 – Oct. 28

Warsh, *American Baroque*

Week 11 – Nov. 4

Norton, *Sacred Gifts*

- class meets in Douglass Commons Community Kitchen or alternate location)

Week 12 – Nov. 11

Cromwell, *The Smuggler’s World*

Part V – Research & Revision

Week 13 – Nov. 18

First version of research paper due on 11/18 at 2 pm

- send as Word document or PDF to pablo.sierra@rochester.edu
- 20 pages for HIST 386W/AAAS 352 credit
- 25-30 pages for HIST 486 credit

Week 14 – Nov. 25 (Thanksgiving, No Class)

Week 15 – Dec. 2

In-Class presentations and Q&A

- 15-20 minute presentation on your research
- prepare audiovisuals of your choice

Week 16 – Dec. 9

Final revision of research paper due on 12/9 at 2 pm

- send as Word document or PDF to pablo.sierra@rochester.edu
- DO NOT send links to Google Docs or Pages

Additional Research Resources

- Bassi, Ernesto. *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Boxer, C.R. *Women in Iberian Expansion Overseas, 1415-1815*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Braun, Harald E. and Lisa Vollendorf, eds. *Theorizing the Ibero-American Atlantic*. Brill: Leiden, 2013.
- Brooks, George. *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*. Ohio University Press, 2003.
- Cañisares-Esguerra, Jorge. *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
- Cardim, Pedro, ed. *Polycentric Monarchies: How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2012.
- Crosby, Alfred W. *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. Westport: Praeger, 2003.
- Daniels, Christine, Michael V. Kennedy, Jack P. Greene, and Amy Turner Bushnell, eds. *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Diffie, Bailey W. and George D. Winius. *Foundations of the Portuguese Empire, 1415-1580*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.
- Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *The Canary Islands After the Conquest: The Making of a Colonial Society in the Early Sixteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.
- Ferreira, Roquinaldo. *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Fromont, Cecile. *The Art of Conversion. Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo*. Williamsburg: Omohundro Institute, 2014.
- Furtado, Júnia Ferreira. "Lives on the Seas: Women's Trajectories in Port Cities of the Portuguese Overseas Empire," in *Women in Port*, 251-286.
- Gómez, Pablo F. "The Circulation of Bodily Knowledge in the Seventeenth-Century Black Spanish Caribbean," *Social History of Medicine* 26, No. 3: 383-402.
- Herzog, Tamar. *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Heywood, Linda. *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017.
- Maxwell, Kenneth. *Conflicts & Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750-1808*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

- McAlister, Lyle N. *Spain and Portugal in the New World, 1492-1700*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
- Megged, Amos and Stephanie Wood. *Mesoamerican Memory: Enduring Systems of Remembrance*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012.
- Monteiro, John. *Blacks of the Land: Indian Slavery, Settler Society and the Portuguese Colonial Enterprise in South America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Newitt, M. D. D. *A History of Portuguese Overseas Expansion, 1400-1668*. London: New York, 2004.
- Palmer, Jennifer. *Intimate Bonds: Family and Slavery in the French Atlantic*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2016.
- Parma Cook, Alexandra. "The Women of Early Modern Triana: Life, Death, and Survival in Seville's Maritime District" in *Women in Port: Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), ed. by Douglas Catterall and Jody Campbell, 41-68.
- Ribeiro Da Silva, Filipa. *Dutch and Portuguese in Western Africa: Empires, Merchants and the Atlantic System, 1580-1674*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Ruette-Orihuela, Krisna and Cristina Soriano, "Remembering the Slave Rebellion of Coro: Historical Memory and Politics in Venezuela," *Ethnohistory* 63, No. 2 (April 2016): 327-349.
- Schorsch, Jonathan. *Swimming the Christian Atlantic: Judeoconvertos, Afroiberians and Amerindians in the Seventeenth Century*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.
- Scott, Julius. *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution*. New York: Verso Books, 2018.
- Seed, Patricia. *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Soriano, Cristina. *Tides of Revolution: Information, Insurgencies and the Crisis of Rule in Colonial Venezuela*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2018.
- Studnicki-Gizbert, A *Nation Upon the Sea: Portugal's Atlantic Diaspora and the Crisis of the Spanish Empire, 1492-1640*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Sweet, James H. *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.
- van Groesen, Michiel. *Amsterdam's Atlantic: Print Culture and the Making of the Dutch Atlantic*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.
- Vollendorf, Lisa. "Navigating the Atlantic Divide: Women, Education, and Literacy in Iberia and the Americas, in *Women of the Iberian Atlantic*, 18-36.
- Walker, Timothy D. "The Role and Practices of the Female Folk Healer in the Early Modern Portuguese Atlantic World," in *Women of the Iberian Atlantic* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2012), edited by Sarah E. Owens and Jane E. Mangan, 148-173.