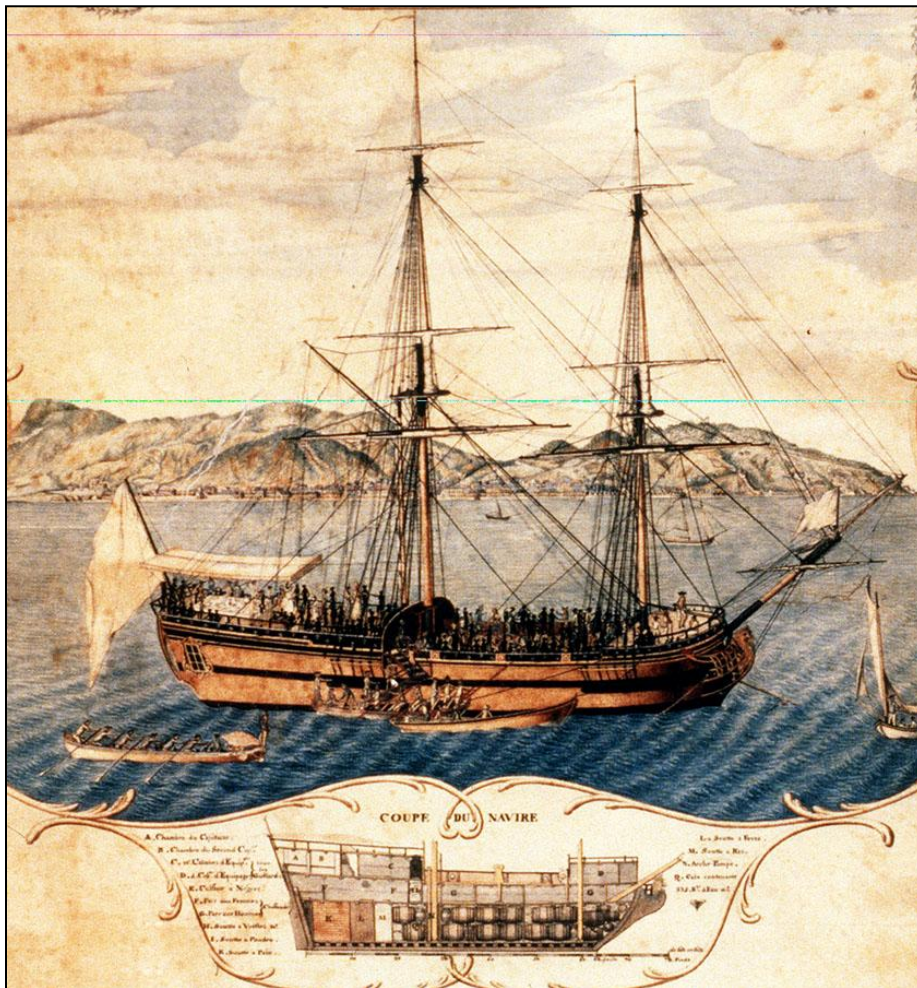


# HISTORY 109: EARLY AMERICA AND THE ATLANTIC WORLD SYLLABUS

Professor Gloria Whiting | [gwhiting@wisc.edu](mailto:gwhiting@wisc.edu) | 5108 Mosse Humanities Building  
Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-3:30 PM or by appointment

Teaching Assistant Leah Webb-Halpern | [webbhalpern@wisc.edu](mailto:webbhalpern@wisc.edu) | 4263 Humanities  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00 PM or by appointment



This 1773 watercolor of French slave ship La Marie-Séraphique in Cap Francais, Saint Domingue (Haiti), shows an iron barrier separating slaves for purchase on the front of the ship from Europeans picnicking on the back. This course will help you understand how people who have not usually been considered integral to American history—such as Afro-Haitian slaves—fundamentally shaped the mainland American colonies and the early United States. Source: Musée du Château des Ducs de Bretagne, Nantes, France. Published in Madeline Burnside ed., *Spirits of the Passage* (New York, 1977), 124.

## Course Description

This course will ask surprising questions. How did Haitian slaves, Aztec gold, and the humble potato influence the history of the region that would become the United States? Because they did—profoundly.

This may not be the sort of history you learned in high school. Traditionally, historians have understood the history of “early America” or “colonial America” as the history of the thirteen colonies that joined to create the United States. But such an approach severs these colonies from their context and creates an affinity between them that did not exist prior to the era of the American Revolution. This course situates these thirteen colonies in the framework of the Atlantic world: the world created by Africans, Europeans, and American Natives from the sixteenth century—when European expansion into the Atlantic basin began in earnest—through the American Revolution, when the thirteen colonies united in a revolt that ushered in an era of state-building in the Atlantic and signaled the beginning of the end of imperial power in the Americas. Together we will explore how people, pathogens, plants, animals, labor systems, ideas, technologies, and institutions across a vast geographic expanse shaped the history of the thirteen colonies that created the United States of America.

## **Objectives:**

I have four main objectives for this course. The first is content-based, and the latter three more process-based:

1. I want you to understand how the early American colonies developed in the context of a rich and interconnected world centered on the Atlantic Ocean.
2. I want you to learn *how* to learn about the past. That is, I want you to understand how to use primary source documents to answer historical questions. This is what historians do, and there’s no reason why you can’t start doing that this semester, even if this is your very first history course at UW.
3. I want you to learn to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
4. I want you to become captivated by the past. I’ll do my best this semester to help you envision times and places so unfamiliar to you that you cultivate a deep fascination with worlds beyond your own. History should never be boring!

## **Format:**

This course will meet on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays for lecture (11:00 – 11:50 AM in Humanities 1121). In addition, discussion sections will be held once a week. Lectures will introduce material that is not replicated in course readings, and it will teach you skills that are important for completing course assignments, so it is important that you attend regularly. (Lecture slides will not be posted on the course website, nor will they be distributed to students via email.) Discussion sections are required.

## **Reading:**

Your reading assignment each week will consist of both primary sources (documents—such as letters, petitions, and memoirs—that were written during the years we are studying) and secondary sources (documents that were written by historians in later years and usually rely on primary sources). Readings will average just under 50 pages each week. Some readings will be from the two books I have ordered for this course, and the others will be available in a course pack. The two required texts are available for purchase at the UW Bookstore, and they are also on reserve at College Library.

Required texts:

Alan Taylor, *American Colonies*, 2002

Brett Rushforth and Paul Mapp, *Colonial North America and the Atlantic World: A History in Documents*, 2009

Selected articles, book chapters, and primary sources will be available in a course pack.

## Computer Policy:

I know this is very old-school, but I ask that you refrain from using computers during lecture. The temptation to get distracted by things that are not related to class is simply too great. I promise that you'll get far more out of this course if you use just a pen and a pad of paper. Cell phones should be silenced and put away. (If you are a McBurney student who needs accommodation, please come talk to me.)

## Requirements:

Discussion section attendance and participation: 25%

Please come to section ready to engage with the material, your peers, and your TA.

Map quiz: 10%

This course works on a broad geographical canvas that includes Europe, Africa, and the Americas. In order to understand the developments we are studying, you must have a good sense of what happened where.

Midterm paper (4-5 pages): 20%

We will discuss this paper further in class.

Source Analyses: 20%

You will be asked to complete two formal primary source analyses during the semester. Each should be one page long. In your analysis, you will think about who created the source you are examining and for what purpose; what it can tell us about the past; and how it relates to the other primary and secondary sources assigned that week. Doing this thoughtfully will refine your ability to evaluate, interpret, and use new information: skills that are crucial not only for historians but for people in just about every profession.

Check-In Quizzes: 25%

In lieu of a final exam, this course will have five low-stakes "check-in quizzes" (each valued at 5% of your final grade). If you attend lecture regularly and read the assigned material, you should do well on these. These quizzes will be given in class every three weeks.

## Course Schedule:

### PART I: SEAFARING, CONQUERING, PLANTING

#### *Week of Jan. 18: Overview of the Course*

Jan. 20 Defining "Early America," Introducing Course Themes

Jan. 22 Before 1492: Indigenous America

***Week of Jan. 25: Iberian Expansion and Conquest, 1400-1600***

- Jan. 25 Portugal Begins to Explore: Atlantic Islands
- Jan. 27 Spanish Conquest in America
- Jan. 29 The Portuguese in Kongo, Angola, and Brazil

*Readings:*

Taylor, *Introduction*

***Week of Feb. 1: Africans in Africa and America, 1400-1700***

- Feb. 1 Slavery in Africa
- Feb. 3 The Atlantic Slave Trade: Beginnings
- Feb. 5 —**Check-In Quiz 1**— Lecture: Surviving the Middle Passage, Making Life in the Americas

*Readings:*

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (1993), ch. 6

Steven Mintz, ed., *African American Voices* (2009), selections:

An Employee of Britain's Royal African Company Describes the Workings of the Slave Trade (pp. 48-49)

Olaudah Equiano, an 11-Year-Old Ibo from Nigeria, Remembers His Kidnapping into Slavery (pp. 49-50)

***Week of Feb. 8: Northern Europeans in the Atlantic, 1556-1670***

- Feb. 8 The French, Dutch, and English Enter the Atlantic
- Feb. 10 Case Study in Comparative Conquest: the English and Spanish
- Feb. 12 Corn, Pigs, Microbes, and the Shaping of the Americas

*Readings:*

Noble David Cook, *Born To Die: Disease and New World Conquest*, ch. 5

Letter from Francois Joseph Le Mercier, Jesuit in New France (*Jesuit Relations*, vol. 15, pp. 11-35: puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations)

Letter from Paul Le Jeune regarding smallpox in New France (*Jesuit Relations*, vol. 19, pp. 8-35: puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations)

**PART II: BUILDING COLONIES**

***Week of Feb. 15: Greater Virginia***

- Feb. 15 Dashed Dreams and False Starts in the Chesapeake
- Feb. 17 Pocahontas, Gender, and English-Indian Relations
- Feb. 19 —**First Source Analysis Due**— Lecture: the Case of Antonio the Negro: Establishing and Institutionalizing American Slavery

*Readings:*

Taylor, ch. 6 and 7

The First Colonists Arrive at Jamestown (Rushforth, pp. 87-91)

Captain John Smith Describes Virginia Indian Society (Rushforth, pp. 91-100)

***Week of Feb. 22: New England***

Feb. 22 Faith, Freedom, Family

Feb. 24 Film: *We Shall Remain—After the Mayflower*

Feb. 26 —**Check-In Quiz 2**— Lecture: Dissenters, Africans, Indians

*Readings:*

Taylor, ch. 8

Winthrop's Vision of New England (Rushforth, pp. 125-128)

Anne Hutchinson Challenges Massachusetts Orthodoxy (Rushforth, pp. 129-136)

***Week of Feb. 29: French in America***

Feb. 29 Beginnings: Fish and Furs

Mar. 2 French Trade, Alliance, and Empire in Mainland North America: Canada and Louisiana

Mar. 4 San Domingue and the French Caribbean

*Readings:*

Taylor, ch. 5 and 16

Indian Diplomacy in New France (Rushforth, pp. 273-276)

A Traveler Describes French Society in St. Lawrence Valley (Rushforth, pp. 276-285)

***Week of Mar. 7: The Anglo-Caribbean Colonies***

Mar. 7 Sugar & Slaves

Mar. 9 Jamaica: Jewel of the British Empire

Mar. 11 —**Midterm Paper Due Today**— Film: *Slavery in Jamaica*

*Readings:*

Taylor, ch. 10

A Portrait of Barbados (Rushforth, pp. 171-179)

Pirates of the Caribbean (Rushforth, pp. 180-188)

***Week of Mar. 14: Carolinas***

Mar. 14 Founding a Caribbean Colony on the Mainland

Mar. 16 Black Rice: Crop, Labor, and Culture in the Carolinas

Mar. 18 —**Check-In Quiz 3**—Lecture: War and Empire in the Early Southeast

*Readings:*

Taylor, ch. 11

A Missionary Discusses Christianity and Slavery (Rushforth, pp. 192-199)

A Description of Eighteenth-Century South Carolina (Rushforth, pp. 199-204)

***Week of Mar. 21: Spring Recess***

***Week of Mar. 28: The Middle Colonies***

Mar. 28 Religious Tolerance and Ethnic Diversity

Mar. 30 Breadbasket of the Atlantic

Apr. 1 **Map Quiz**

*Readings:*

Taylor, ch. 12  
Dutch Ministers Discuss New Netherland (Rushforth, pp. 205-210)  
Welsh Immigrant Life in Pennsylvania (Rushforth, pp. 218-220)

### **PART III: REVOLUTIONARY REORGANIZATIONS**

#### ***Week of Apr. 4: The Seven Years' War in the Atlantic World***

Apr. 4 George Washington's Blunder and World War  
Apr. 6 The Treaty of Paris and the "Peace" that Made War  
Apr. 8 Predicaments in British Imperial Management

*Readings:*

Taylor, ch. 18  
Disaster in American Forest (Rushforth, pp. 315-316)  
Pontiac's Forces Surprise and are Surprised (Rushforth, pp. 320-323)

#### ***Week of Apr. 11: Revolution in North America***

Apr. 11 Women and War  
Apr. 13 Film: *Mary Silliman's War*  
Apr. 15 —**Check-In Quiz 4**—Lecture: Civil War

*Readings:*

Linda Kerber, ed., *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, selections:  
"The ladies going about for money exceeded everything..." (pp. 134-135)  
Rachel Wells, "I have Don as much to Carrey on the Warr as maney..." (pp. 137-138)  
Annette Gordon-Reed, "The Hemings-Jefferson Treaty: Paris, 1789" (pp. 139-146)  
Linda K. Kerber, "The Republican Mother and the Woman Citizen: Contradictions and Choices in Revolutionary America" (pp. 147-153)

#### ***Week of Apr. 18: The Spread of Liberty***

Apr. 18 Faithful Islands and a Rebellious Mainland  
Apr. 20 The Declaration of Independence and Its Afterlife  
Apr. 22 Making the Constitution: From Above? From Below?

*Readings:*

David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History*, ch. 1  
Thomas Jefferson's "Original Rough Draft" of The Declaration of Independence  
The American Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776)

#### ***Week of Apr. 25: Revolution in France and its Empire***

Apr. 25 American Liberty and the Onset of Revolution in France  
Apr. 27 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Overthrow of Slavery in Haiti  
Apr. 29 —**Second Source Analysis Due Today**—Film: *Greatest Black Emancipation*

*Readings:*

Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean: A Brief History with Documents*, part 1 (pp. 7-42), and selections from part 2:

*The Code Noir*, 1685 (pp. 49-54)

Antoine Dalmas, *History of the Revolution of Saint-Domingue*, 1814 (pp. 89-93)

***Week of May 2: After Haiti***

May 2 Building the First Black Republic: Race, Rights, and Constitution(s)

May 4 Liberty in Haiti; Slavery and Expansion in the Early American Republic

May 6 —**Check-In Quiz 5**—Lecture: Bringing Things Together

*Readings:*

*Slave Revolution in the Caribbean*, selections:

Thomas Jefferson, *Letters*, 1797-1802 (pp. 159-162)

Refugees in Charlestown, South Carolina, *Petition* (pp. 162-164)

Charles Brockden Brown, *St. Domingo*, 1804 (pp. 164-166)