

Department of History  
University of Wisconsin

Undergraduate Seminar in World History  
*“Exploration and First Contact”*

History 600

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263-1800/263-1816

**COURSE CONTENT:**

This seminar will focus on the cultural, biological and demographic consequences of European expansion – from 1492 to the 1920s. Through a series of case studies we will examine the initial period of “first contact” - “the moment” when the people of two cultures meet for the first time. The reading material will range widely, from the 17th century to the present. We will cover much of the world - Africa, Asia, Europe, the South Pacific, North and South America. While the biological and social sciences will provide the framework for many of our discussions, we will draw on other academic disciplines as well.

**BASIC REQUIREMENTS:**

We will meet one day a week for two hours. Attendance is required. Each (and every) week there will be a short written assignment to insure that the reading is completed on time. The assignments will vary in length from short summaries of the readings (2-3 pages) to short analytical essays (5-10 pages) to the occasional longer paper (10-12 pages) requiring some outside research.

The seminar situation requires that everyone be prepared to participate in the discussion. Although it is not mandatory that each student has something to contribute each week, regular participation is assumed to be a minimum prerequisite for a good grade.

A longer research paper (20 - 30 pages) will be due at the end of the term. It will be an extension of one of the weekly papers already completed.

**SOME OF REQUIRED READING:**

Students should be warned that the reading requirements for the course are considerable. In addition to the books on order at the University Book Store, there will be materials on reserve at the Reserve Reading Room in H.C. White Library.

**Some** of the books available at UW Book Store are (others will be added to this list):

- M. Lewis & W. Clark, *Journals of Lewis & Clark*. (DeVoto edition).
- Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism* (Cambridge).
- Bernal Dias, *The Conquest of New Spain* (Penguin)
- Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams* (paperback edition).
- E. L. Schiefelin & R. Crittenden, *Like People You See in a Dream* (Stanford).

**SUGGESTED READING:**

It will be useful to have an atlas for the course. There are a number of inexpensive, small volumes available. Any one will do.

- H. Kinder & W. Hilgemann, *The Anchor Atlas of World History* I (Doubleday).
- The Random House Concise World Atlas* (Random House).
- Hammond World Atlas: Collectors Edition* (Hammond).
- The Signet World Atlas* (Signet Press).

If you are unsure of your writing skills you may want to buy a copy of Henry Steffens & M.J. Dickerson, *Writer's Guide: History* (D.C. Heath) or Jules R. Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History* (St. Martin's Press).