

**CORE-UA 541 Cultures and Contexts: New World Encounters**  
**Silver Center, Room 411**  
**SPRING 2014**

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SPRING OFFICE HOURS:  
Thursdays 2:30 to 4 PM

During the Atlantic Age of Sail, from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, the peoples of four continents, Europe, Africa, North America and South America, began to interact in sustained and complex ways for the first time. They brought to their encounters diverse cosmologies (beliefs about the spiritual world), epistemologies (systems of knowing and gathering empirical knowledge), family formations (networks of kinship), social configurations (patterns of socio-economic relationships), labor relationships (distribution of work), trading practices (systems of material accumulation and exchange), state configurations (forms of political organization), and traditions of war and peace (forms of conflict and negotiation across groups). Yet, from their divergent approaches to the distribution and regulation of land, population, and goods arose a complex new transoceanic system that would tie together these four corners of the Atlantic. This course will explore the impact of social and cultural factors on the development of economies, societies, and governments across the Atlantic. In-depth reading of early historical accounts, travel narratives and personal memoirs as well as analysis of novels, poems, and plays, will allow us to see the role of culture in helping Atlantic peoples to make sense of their changing worlds. Students will analyze the creative tensions of encounter and come to understand the productive conflicts that ultimately gave rise to an Age of Atlantic Revolutions.

**Course Readings:**

Where possible, print editions of assigned readings have been ordered through the NYU Center. Many of the assigned readings are old enough to be out of copyright and so are available in free online additions. You may download and print them for use in sections. Links for these works are provided in the resources section of our class website on NYU Classes. Remaining works will be scanned and placed in folders on NYU classes.

William Apess, *A Son of the Forest: The Experience of William Apess, a Native of the Forest*  
Aphra Behn, *The Widow Ranter, or the History of Bacon in Virginia*  
Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*  
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*  
Thomas Harriot, *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*  
*Jesuit Relations of New France*  
Thomas Moore, *Utopia*  
Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*  
Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of the Things of New Spain*  
William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*  
Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko*

William Towrson, *The First Voyage Made to the Coast of Guinea*  
Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral*

**Reading Assignments at-a-Glance:** What to read when and where to get it!

Week 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION, no assignment

Week 2: **Purchase Book**

Moore, *Utopia*

Week 3: **Purchase Book**

Sahagún, *General History of the Things of New Spain, Book 10, The People*

Week 4: **Reading Available on NYU Classes Website**

Towrson, *First Voyage to Guinea* in Hakluyt, ed, *Principle Navigations*

Week 5: **Purchase Book**

Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*

Week 6: **Reading Available on NYU Classes Website**

Las Casas, *Short Account* (Comparison of early English translations)

Harriot, *Brief and True Report*

Week 7: **Reading Available via Syllabus hotlink**

*The Jesuit Relations*

<http://archive.org/stream/jesuitrelationsa10thwa#page/34/mode/2up>

Week 8: SPRING BREAK, no assignment

Week 9: **Purchase Book**

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Week 10: **Reading Available via Syllabus hotlink**

Behn, *The Widow Ranter*

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/45/>

Week 11: **Purchase Book**

Southerne, *Ooronoko A Tragedy*

Week 12: **1<sup>st</sup> Reading Available on NYU Classes Website, for 2<sup>nd</sup> Purchase Book**

Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects*

Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

Week 13: **Purchase Book**

Apess, *A Son of the Forest*

Week 14: **Purchase Book**

Paine, *The Rights of Man*

Week 15: REVIEW, no assignment

### **Cultural Resources: New York in the Atlantic World**

Each week highlights some of New York City's countless cultural resources: museums, libraries, and historic sites that can enrich your course experience. Please be sure to contact the site in question before you plan a visit; the information and descriptions provided on this syllabus have been copied from various websites and may not be accurate in every case.

We hope you will make virtual visits to each site week-by-week and will make time for a visit or two in person as well. Such visits are not required but they are enriching!

## Course Requirements\*

**1. Lecture Attendance & Attention.** The most basic requirement of the course is *regular and prompt* class attendance. Lectures will complement course readings, providing context for and commentary on the themes, evidence, and arguments addressed in the assigned primary sources. Material from lecture will be an important component of exams. **To optimize your learning and to show courtesy to your professor and fellow students, please turn off all phones and refrain from texting or using the internet during class sessions. Laptop use is discouraged--and will be universally banned should any problems arise.** Studies show that handwritten notes are more strongly encoded in the brain than are typed notes; studies also show you can't pay attention to two things at once!

**2. Class Readings and Section Participation (15%).** Each week you will be assigned primary-source readings that coordinate with that week's lectures. These documents provide a look at the kind of original evidence on which scholars base their arguments and give an "up close" or even "eye-witness" view of historical events. Total reading assignments have been held to under 100 pages per week, a substantial but manageable amount. Studying at the college level requires learning to read and write critically and creatively, so be prepared to do a lot of each!

Students *must* complete reading assignments in time for their discussion section. Section provides the opportunity to analyze and digest what you have read, to ask questions, and to integrate information from reading and lecture. It is a critical component of the course. For that reason, *active participation* (and not just attendance) will be weighted heavily in your grade.

**3. Papers (30%).** You will write six short (3-paged) reflection papers in this class (each worth 5%) in which you will analyze and discuss our assigned readings. Papers are due every other week on the following dates:

February 17: on Moore, *Utopia* or on Sahagún, *General History*

March 3: on Towrson, *The First Voyage* or on Las Casas, *A Short Account*

March 24: on Harriot, *Brief and True Report* or on Jesuit Relations

April 7: on Shakespeare, *The Tempest* or on Behn, *The Widow Ranter*

April 21 on Southerne, *Oroonoko* or on Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*

May 5: on Apess, *A Son of the Forest* or on Paine, *The Rights of Man*

Each week, you will receive a set of questions via the NYU Classes to help you interrogate the major themes and topics of that week's reading. These questions will help you prepare for discussion sections. In addition, for each paper assignment you will then choose one of the readings from the prior two weeks on which to write a formal essay for submission.

**5. Exams (45%).** There will be both a mid-term and a final exam in this class. The **mid-term exam**, given during the lecture hour in week seven, will be worth 15%, the **final exam**, scheduled by the registrar, will be worth 30%.

**4. Late Policy.** Late paper submissions will be penalized except as permitted by the instructor under extraordinary circumstances.

**6. Academic Integrity.** All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. It is your responsibility to avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Cheating, plagiarism, etc. will constitute grounds for failure in this course as well as referral to university officials. *No* collaborative work is permitted in this class beyond collegial discussions in recitation section. Please share with me any difficulties you are having with your work and avoid resorting to desperate measures. You are always welcome in office hours (even if only to chat!). You can also email or phone me with questions or concerns.  
\* Please see also the attached academic guidelines and statement on integrity.

**Week One**  
**Course Introduction**

**January 27**

**Lecture 1:**

Course Overview 1: Population, Property, and Philosophy on the Four Continents of the Atlantic Rim: Africa, Europe, North and South America

**Lecture 2:**

Worlds of Wonder and Marvelous Possessions

NO REQUIRED READING THIS WEEK

**Week Two**  
**Two Old Worlds: Europe and Africa**

**February 3**

**Lecture 1:**

Sacrament and Contract: Religion and Family, Economy and State in Early Modern Europe

**Lecture 2:**

Deep Roots and Littoral Networks: Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World

**Required Reading:**

**1516**

Thomas Moore, *Utopia* (pp. 9-137)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History  
19 W. 44th Street, Suite 500 New York, NY 10036-5902

The Gilder Lehrman Collection is the largest private collection of American history documents in the world. It preserves, exhibits, and disseminates archival resources chronicling the history of the United States from the beginning of European colonization. The Gilder-Lehrman website makes available a tremendous amount of primary source material (both images and documents) and contains numerous links to other highly reputable academic websites.

This week, check out their website to view their diverse collection of primary and secondary sources on imperial rivalries across the Atlantic.

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/americas-1620/imperial-rivalries>

**Week Three**  
**The Americas: First Nations Peoples**

**February 10**

Lecture 1:

North: Facing East from Indian Country across the North Atlantic

Lecture 2:

South: Imperial Formations and Local Communities from Mexico to Peru

Required Reading:

**1540-1585**

Sahagún, *General History of the Things of New Spain (Florentine Codex), Book 10, The People*  
Selection in translation (~ 80 pages)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** National Museum of the American Indian  
One Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004

Opened in October 1994, the George Gustav Heye Center of the National Museum of the American Indian, at the historic Alexander Hamilton U.S. Custom House in lower Manhattan, serves as the National Museum of the American Indian's exhibition and education facility in New York City. The museum is a branch of the Smithsonian.

This week, check out their special exhibition, "First American Art," which ran through 2006 and is still available on line.

212-514-3700

[http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/first\\_american\\_art/firstamericanart.html](http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/first_american_art/firstamericanart.html)

Find current exhibitions at:

<http://www.nmai.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/newyork/>

**Week Four**  
**The Rise of the Atlantic Complex**

**February 17**

Lecture 1:

Africa's Discovery of Europe: The Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and English on the West African Coast

Lecture 2:

An Epidemiology of Empire: The Columbian Exchange

Required Reading:

**1555**

Towrson, *The First Voyage Made to the Coast of Guinea*

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** National Museum of the American Indian

One Bowling Green, New York, NY 10004

Despite much nineteenth-century commentary on the phenomenon of the “vanishing Indian” Native American culture remains alive and well. Get the perspective of contemporary Indian artists at the ironically titled online exhibition, “Reservation X.”  
212-514-3700

[http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/reservation\\_x/intro.htm](http://www.nmai.si.edu/exhibitions/reservation_x/intro.htm)

**Week Five**  
**The Spanish Atlantic**

**February 24**

**Lecture 1:**

Ambivalent Conquests in the Caribbean: Island Hopping to the Yucatan

**Lecture 2:**

Imperial Transfers: Comparing the Conquests of Mexico and Peru

**Required Reading:**

**1542**

Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*  
(pp. 3-130)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History  
19 W. 44th Street, Suite 500 New York, NY 10036-5902

The online resources at Gilder Lehrman include images of original imprints of Las Casas.  
Visit the website this week to view it:

<https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/americas-1620/american-indians>

**Week Six**  
**Early English Forays**

**March 3**

**Lecture 1:**

The Black Legend & English Sales Propaganda

**Lecture 2:**

The Lost Colonies and the First Plantations in English America

**Required Reading:**

**1583**

First English edition:

Las Casas, *The Spanish Colonie* (preface only, 7 pp)

**1656**

Second English edition: Las Casas, *The Tears of the Indians* (preface only, 10 pp)

**1588**

Harriot, *Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (entire, 91 pp)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** The Metropolitan Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street, New York, New York 10028-0198

The Met's "Arts of Africa, Oceania, and America Collection" contains more than 11,000 objects (including sculpture, monuments, metal ornaments, masks, costumes, and textiles) from sub-Saharan Africa and North, Central, and South America.

212-535-7710

<http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-museum/museum-departments/curatorial-departments/art-of-africa-oceania-and-the-americas>

**Week Seven**

**New France**

**March 10**

**Lecture 1:**

Jesuit Missions and the Rise of a Fur Trade / Slave Trade System

**Lecture 2:**

MID-TERM EXAM

**Required Reading:**

**[1610]**

New France, *Jesuit Relations*, Volume 10, Hurons, selected sections from Chapter 2, pp 35-137 (The assignment is only 50 pages as the English and French are printed on facing pages; this will allow time for mid-term preparation this week.)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** Huguenot Street Historic District

New Paltz, NY

The English were far from the only Europeans to colonize North America. Even within "the original thirteen colonies" that would comprise the first United States, many other European groups established prominence. New Paltz, New York (settled by French Huguenots in competition with the Dutch as well as Native Americans) claims to have the oldest continuously inhabited street in the present-day U.S.: Huguenot Street. Go to their web site for more information and scroll down to take a virtual tour of the district's historic buildings.

<http://www.hvnet.com/museums/huguenotst/>

**Week Eight**  
**SPRING BREAK**



**Week Nine**  
**Caribbean Cauldron**

**March 24**

Lecture 1:

Mosquito Empires: Imperial Rivalries and Economic Competition

Lecture 2:

Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: The Rise of Staple Crop Slavery

Required Reading:

**1611**

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

(entire, pp. 1-136)\*

\*NOTE: This pagination includes extensive footnotes to clarify Elizabethan language...

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** Sylvester Manor Educational Farm

80 North Ferry Road, Shelter Island, NY 11964

631.749.0626

Find a little piece of the colonial Caribbean in the modern-day Long Island Sound. Sylvester Manor began as a seventeenth-century provisioning plantation producing food for consumption by enslaved workers on the Caribbean sugar estates of the Sylvester family. Active archeological digs on the grounds of the surviving Georgian manor house indicate that on the working plantation, Europeans, enslaved Africans and the local Native Manhansett population interacted through the 17th century.

**Week Ten**  
**British America Emerges**

**March 31**

Lecture 1:

1676: A Year of European vs. Indian Clashes

Lecture 2:

Preachers, Merchants, and Slavers from Newport to Charleston

**1690**

Aphra Behn, *The Widow Ranter, or the History of Bacon in Virginia*

(entire, 77 pages)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** Virtual Jamestown

Visit the Jamestown of John Smith from the comfort of your computer. Built in 2007 to coincide with the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Jamestown, the website contains a 3-

D recreation of a Paspahegh Indian settlement, full-text searchable versions of the *Complete Works of John Smith*, links to Atlantic World research networks, and more.  
<http://www.virtualjamestown.org/page2.html>

### **Week Eleven**

#### **Exploitation and Extraction Around the Atlantic Basin: People and Land**

**April 7**

Lecture 1:

Saltwater Slavery and the Contradiction of Human Commodities

Lecture 2:

Consuming Interests and Changes in the Land

Required Reading:

**1696**

Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko*  
(entire, 81 pages)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** The Metropolitan Museum of Art

1000 Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street, New York, New York 10028-0198

The Met's "American Decorative Arts Collection," contains so-called period rooms, intact rooms removed from historic homes and furnished with authentic period household objects, paintings, and antique furniture.

<http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/new-installations/the-new-american-wing-part-2-the-charles-engelhard-court-and-the-period-rooms>

You can also access a slideshow from the museum's permanent American Decorative Arts collection at:

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/fede/hd\\_fede.htm-slideshow1](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/fede/hd_fede.htm-slideshow1)

### **Week Twelve**

#### **Moral Capital: Enlightenment, Economy, and Society**

**April 14**

Lecture 1:

Religious Economies and Christian Alchemy

Lecture 2:

Moral Sentiments, Christian Benevolence, and Racial Thought

**1767**

Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects Religious and Moral* (10 selected pages)

**1791**

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*  
(selection, 75 pages)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** African Burial Ground

290 Broadway at Duane St, Manhattan, 10048.

This 18<sup>th</sup> century cemetery was accidentally uncovered during building construction in 1991 and is now a historic site. Learn more at the dedicated website detailing the archeological findings:

212/637-2019

[http://www.africanburialground.gov/ABG\\_Main.htm](http://www.africanburialground.gov/ABG_Main.htm)

## **Week Thirteen** **The Pastoral and the Imperial**

**April 21**

**Lecture 1:**

Mapping Spanish, French, and English Contests for Empire in the North American West

**Lecture 2:**

Landed Property and Republican Thought: Country Ideology and the Quest for Continental Control

**Required Reading:**

**1829**

William Apess, *A Son of the Forest: The Experience of Wiliam Apess, a Native of the Forest* (entire, 56 pages)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** Sir William Johnson House

Fort Johnson, NY 12070

The home of Sir William Johnson, the British Indian agent in North America, survives and is located in upstate New York. It can be visited via virtual tour:

<http://www.oldfortjohnson.org/>

## **Week Fourteen** **The Age of Revolutions**

**April 28**

**Lecture 1:**

The Rights of Man in America and France

**Lecture 2:**

New World Avengers: Anti-Slavery and Independence from Haiti to Mexico

**Required Reading:**

**1791**

Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*  
(entire, 62 pages)

**\*\*Cultural Resource\*\*** King Manor Museum

153rd Street and Jamaica Avenue, in King Park, Jamaica, New York

Visit the home where Rufus King, contributor to the Constitution, Federalist politician, and anti-slavery activist, lived from 1805 to 1827. The house and grounds in Queens are open to tours, while the website contains samples from King's correspondence. Hofstra University conducts archeological digs at the site.

718-206-0545

<http://www.kingmanor.org>

**Week Fifteen**  
**Course Conclusion**

**May 5**

Lecture 1:

Reflections: How to Interrogate "The New World"

Lecture 2:

Course Review

Section: No new Assignment