

**CORE-UA 541**  
**Cultures and Contexts: Early Atlantic Encounters**  
**12 Waverly Place, Room G08**  
**TTH 11:00 AM-12:15 PM**

**FALL 2021**

Professor Nicole Eustace

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**HYBRID OFFICE HOURS** for Professor Eustace:

Tues/Thurs 9:45- 10:45 AM  
—Meet in person or via [ZOOM](#)—  
—add'l times by appointment—

Professor Eustace is always available to discuss academic concerns and course content. I look forward to getting to know you! Please kindly direct ALL questions about logistics to your AI. I cannot answer the emails of 130+ students registration, attendance, etc.

Assistant Instructors:

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During the Atlantic Age of Sail, from the 15th through the 19th 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 Revolutions.

### **Course Readings:**

Where possible, print editions of assigned readings have been ordered through the NYU Book Center. Other readings, old enough to be out of copyright, are available in free online additions. Links for these works are provided in the “Syllabus” section of our class site on Brightspace. You may download and print them for use in sections. Remaining works have been scanned and placed in the “Scanned Readings” tab on Brightspace.

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 More, *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**

More, *Utopia*

Week 3: **Reading Available on NYU Brightspace**

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

Week 4: **Purchase Book**

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

Week 5: **Purchase Book**

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

Week 6: **Reading Available on NYU Brightspace**

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 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 Brightspace, for 2<sup>nd</sup> Purchase Book**

Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects*

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

Week 13: THANKSGIVING BREAK, No Assignment

Week 14: **Purchase Book**

Apess, *A Son of the Forest*

Week 15: **Purchase Book**

Paine, *The Rights of Man*

Week 16: REVIEW, No Assignment

NOTE: You will find weekly reading guides and questions in the “Resources” section on Brightspace. You do NOT need to provide written answers to these questions. They are meant to suggest especially important themes and issues for you to consider as you read and to provide a common basis for discussion across different recitation sections.

## Course Requirements:

**MASK UP! Everyone must wear a mask that fully covers the nose and mouth at all times. No exceptions, no excuses. If I see your mask slip, I will ask you to leave class immediately. I do not want to waste time and energy monitoring this, so please do your part to keep yourself and everyone around you safe. Wear a mask & keep it up.**

### 1. Lecture Attendance & Attention.

**Attendance:** There are two key considerations regarding attendance:

—First: Lectures are the heart of this class. The material presented in lecture will guide your learning, creating the foundation for course readings by 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. You cannot succeed in this class if you don't come regularly to lecture.

—Second: NYU strongly encourages anyone who feels even the faintest symptom of sickness to stay home and rest as an essential layer of safety precautions for keeping Covid under control. Please do your part to KEEP EACH OTHER SAFE and stay home whenever needed.

How will we manage the conflict between these two considerations?

—**Form a Class Notes Group.** On the first day of their discussion section, students must create class notes groups of 6 to 8 people who agree to share and compare class notes. Make an organized list of names and exchange email addresses. Give your Assistant Instructor the list of students in your notes group.

—Any time you miss lecture, reach out to the members of your notes group and request the opportunity to copy their notes. Once you have reviewed notes from a group member, please feel free to contact Professor Eustace either during class or during office hours with any questions you may have.

**Attention:** 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. 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 multiple things at once!

**2. Class Readings and Section Participation (20%).** Primary-source readings are assigned weekly to coordinate with lectures. These documents provide a look at the kind of original evidence that scholars use to support their arguments and give an “up close” or even “eye-witness” view of historical events. Each week, you will have access to a **Reading Guide via NYU Brightspace** with information and questions to help you start thinking about the major themes and topics of the week's reading. Total reading assignments are 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!

**Complete reading assignments in time for discussion section.** Section meetings provide the opportunity to analyze and digest what you have read, to ask questions, and to integrate information from reading and lecture. They are a critical component of the course. For that reason, *active participation* (and not just attendance) will be weighted in your grade.

**3. Papers (30%).** You will write five short (three-paged) reflection papers in this class (each worth 6%). In these papers, you will analyze and discuss our assigned readings. For each paper assignment you will choose one of the readings from the two weeks indicated and write a formal essay on that primary source.

There are six possible papers; you must choose five to write by the assigned due date.

- Everyone must write the first paper
- You may then choose to skip one of the remaining five assignments.
- As a bonus option, students who choose to write all six papers by the regularly assigned due dates may drop the lowest grade.

Papers are due every other week on the following dates:

September 21: on More, *Utopia* or on Towrson, *The First Voyage*

October 5: on Sahagún, *General History* or on Las Casas, *A Short Account*

October 19: on Harriot, *Brief and True Report* or on Jesuit Relations

November 9: on Shakespeare, *The Tempest* or on Behn, *The Widow Ranter*

November 30: on Southerne, *Oroonoko* or on Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*

December 14: on Apess, *A Son of the Forest* or on Paine, *The Rights of Man*

**4. Exams (50%).** 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 eight, will be worth 15%. The **final exam**, still to be scheduled by the registrar, will be worth 35%.

Mid-Term Exam: Thursday, October 21, **in class**

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 21 (Final confirmation is still pending from the NYU Registrar. Check Albert for details.)

**5. Extra Credit.** Every student who comes to Professor Eustace's office hours at least once may receive extra credit in the amount of 1 %. Confused by some of the course material? Want to know more about a topic? Have a historical insight to share? Need some academic advice? Just want to say hi? Come on by!

**6. Bonus Option:** Students who chose to write all six papers and submit them on the original due date may drop the lowest grade at the end of the semester. You cannot add back a paper after the regular due date.

**7. Late Policy.** Late paper submissions will be penalized except as permitted by the instructor under extraordinary circumstances. Bear in mind that you are unlikely to be too ill

to write a paper in more than one 2-week segment of class and you have the right to skip the paper of your choosing.

**8. 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 Core Curriculum Office statement on integrity.

***Now a global network university, NYU was founded in New York City on lands historically inhabited by the Lenape people, lands that remain meaningful to Indigenous peoples today. As members of this class community, we will dedicate ourselves to advancing values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. Each discussion section will create and mutually commit to a community statement on the ethics of belonging. This class is a \*SAFE ZONE\* for individuals of all races, ethnicities, abilities, religions, sexual orientations, and gender identities.***

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

**September 2**

Lecture 1:  
Course Overview

NO REQUIRED READING THIS WEEK

**Week Two**  
**Europeans on the “Ocean Sea”**

**September 7 & 9**

Lecture 1:  
Worlds of Wonder and Marvelous Possessions

Lecture 2:  
Sacrament and Contract: Religion and Family, Economy and State in Early Modern Europe

Required Reading:

**1516**  
Thomas More, *Utopia* (pp. 9-137)

**Week Three**  
**The African Atlantic**

**September 14 & 16**

Lecture 1:  
Deep Roots and Littoral Networks: Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World

Lecture 2:  
Africa’s Discovery of Europe

Required Reading:

**1555**  
Towrson, *The First Voyage Made to the Coast of Guinea*

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

## **September 21 & 23**

### Lecture 1:

South: Imperial Formations and Local Communities from Mexico to Peru

### Lecture 2:

North: Facing East from Indian Country across the North Atlantic

### Required Reading:

#### **1540-1585**

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

**FIRST PAPER DUE 9/21**

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

### **September 28 & 30**

### 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)

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

### **October 5 & 7**

### Lecture 1:

The Black Legend & English Sales Propaganda

### Lecture 2:

The Lost Colonies and the First Plantations in English America



**SECOND PAPER DUE 10/05**

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)

**Week Seven**

**New France**

**October 12 & 14**

Lecture 1:

NO CLASS: University Runs on a Monday Schedule

Lecture 2:

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

Required Reading:

**[1610]**

New France, *Jesuit Relations*, Volume 10, Hurons, selected sections from Chapter 2, pp 35-139 (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.)

**Week Eight**

**The Rise of the Atlantic Complex**

**&**

**Mid-Term Exam**

**October 19 & 21**

Lecture 1:

The Ideology and Epidemiology of Empire

Lecture 2:

Mid-Term Exam in Class

THIRD PAPER DUE 10/19

Required Reading:  
Exam Preparation Only: **NO SECTIONS THIS WEEK**

**Week Nine**  
**Slavery and Freedom in the “Torrid Zone”**

**October 26 & 28**

Lecture 1:  
Bitter Sweets: Comparing Staple Crop Empires

Lecture 2:  
Sugar and Slavery “Beyond the Line”

Required Reading:

**1611**

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*  
(entire, pp. 1-136)\*

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

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

**November 2 & 4**

Lecture 1:  
Religious Economies and Christian Alchemy

Lecture 2:  
1675: A Year of European vs. Indian Clashes

Required Reading:

**1690**

Aphra Behn, *The Widow Ranter, or the History of Bacon in Virginia*  
(entire, 77 pages)

**Week Eleven**  
**Moral Capital: Exploitation, Extraction, and Enlightenment**

**November 9 & 11**

Lecture 1:  
Bound for Freedom or Freedom Bounded: British Migrants in North America

Lecture 2:  
Saltwater Slavery in the British Sugar Islands

Required Reading:

**1696**

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

FOURTH PAPER DUE 11/9

**Week Twelve**  
**The Pastoral and the Imperial**

**November 16 & 18**

Lecture 1:

Consuming Interests and Changes in the Land

Lecture 2:

Moral Sentiments, Christian Benevolence, and Racial Thought

Required Reading:

**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)

**Week Thirteen**  
**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**November 23 & 25**

Lecture 1:

CLASS CANCELLED: Prof. Eustace will be available via ZOOM during class time today for extra office hours.

Lecture 2:

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Required Reading:

NO READING ASSIGNMENT THIS WEEK

**Week Fourteen**  
**Beginning the Age of Revolutions**

**November 30 & December 2**

**Lecture 1:**

Imperial Defeat with a Veneer of Victory: The Seven Years War and the Rise of Revolution

**Lecture 2:**

Reason, Passion, and the American Revolution

FIFTH PAPER DUE 11/30

**Required Reading:**

**1829**

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

**Week Fifteen**  
**Age of Revolutions**

**December 7 & 9**

**Lecture 1:**

The Rights of Man: Family Romance in the French Revolution

**Lecture 2:**

Avengers of the New World: The Haitian Revolution

**Required Reading:**

**1791**

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

**Week 16**  
**Course Conclusion**

**December 14**

**LAST DAY OF CLASS:**

Course Review Exercises: Bring Your Questions to Class

SIXTH PAPER DUE 12/14



## **Statement on Academic Integrity The College Core Curriculum, College of Arts and Science**

As a student at New York University, you have been admitted to a community of scholars who value free and open inquiry. Our work depends on honest assessment of ideas and their sources; and we expect you, as a member of our community, likewise to maintain the highest integrity in your academic work. Because of the central importance of these values to our intellectual life together, those who fail to maintain them will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University.

Plagiarism consists in presenting ideas and words without acknowledging their source and is an offense against academic integrity. Any of the following acts constitutes a crime of plagiarism.

Using a phrase, sentence, or passage from another person's work without quotation marks and attribution of the source.

Paraphrasing words or ideas from another's work without attribution.

Reporting as your own research or knowledge any data or facts gathered or reported by another person.

Submitting in your own name papers or reports completed by another.

Submitting your own original work toward requirements in more than one class without the prior permission of the instructors.

Other offenses against academic integrity include the following.

Collaborating with other students on assignments without the express permission of the instructor. Giving your work to another student to submit as his or her own.

Copying answers from other students during examinations.

Using notes or other sources to answer exam questions without the instructor's permission. Secreting or destroying library or reference materials.

Submitting as your own work a paper or results of research that you have purchased from a commercial firm or another person.

***Particular emphasis is placed on the use of papers and other materials to be found on the World -Wide Web, whether purchased or freely available. In addition to having access to the same search engines as students, faculty also have at their disposal a number of special websites devoted to detecting plagiarism from the web.***

Plagiarism and other cases of academic fraud are matters of fact, not intention. It is therefore crucial that you be diligent in assuring the integrity of your work.

Use quotation marks to set off words that are not your own.

Learn to use proper forms of attribution for source materials.

Do your own original work in each class, without collaboration, unless otherwise instructed. Don't use published sources, the work of others, or material from the web without attribution.

For further information, consult the College of Arts and Science website on academic integrity at <http://cas.nyu.edu/page/academicintegrity>.