

The Rise of the Atlantic World

1492-1830

Comprehensive Course Syllabus

Course Description:

Christopher Columbus' epic voyage of 1492 was a watershed in human history. Over the next three centuries, Western Europe projected its trade, power, and influence, across much of the globe. The Atlantic became both a highway and a battlefield as the western powers contested the space between the Old and New Worlds. This rivalry, in turn, transformed Europe itself, as the new Atlantic states supplanted those of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Revolutions in ship design, commerce, manufacturing, banking, politics, weaponry, and science resulted in new empires and identities. All said, the rise of the Atlantic World, is really the birth of modern times.

This process came at a fantastic cost. Of the 37,000,000 inhabitants of the New World in 1492, disease, abuse, and war killed some 90% over the next two centuries.. In some regions, particularly the Caribbean, the figure was simply everyone. In response to this demographic disaster, the Europeans purchased nearly 12,000,000 Africans and forcibly deported them to America to serve as labor. Slavery in the Americas was a brutal business. In the hellholes of Jamaica and Brazil most of them lasted only 7-8 years. Blacks would labor for centuries without compensation under a race-based caste system which would endure long after slavery itself had been abolished. The consequences of this remain today.

The Rise of the Atlantic World is intended to introduce students to this epochal event and how it shaped the history of the planet

Texts: J.H. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830*
Claiborne Skinner, *The Upper Country: French Enterprise in the Colonial Great Lakes*
Gary Nash, *Red, White, and Black*

Films: Bruce Beresford, *Black Robe* (1991)
James Burke, *Credit Where it is Due* (1985)
Michael Apted, *Amazing Grace* (2006)

Assessments: Three papers (2-7 pages) (1-10 pages)
Weekly reading quizzes

ESSENTIAL CONTENT

The three primary units will address the following themes:

- I. The Character of European Colonization
- II. The Struggle for Empire
- III The Age of Revolution

ESSENTIAL CONTENT

The Atlantic World is arranged under three broad goals that the instructors will focus on teaching and assessing the students in. These goals are given below:

Unit 1: The Character of European Colonization

Goals:

Students will understand:

- 1. The geography, peoples, technology, and cultures of Europe, Africa, North America and South America on the eve of Columbus' voyage.
- 2. The Maritime technology of the 15th and 16th centuries.
- 3. Why English, French, and Spanish colonization were such distinct processes.

Students will demonstrate mastery of course materials and concepts through

- 1. Successful performance in reading tests.
- 2. Competent participation in the Armada simulation.
- 3. Successful completion of the summative essay on the character of European colonization.

Unit 2: The Struggle for Empire.

Goals:

Students will understand:

- 1. The role of the imperial wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in transforming the Atlantic World
- 2. The reasons for the English victory
- 3. The legacy

Students will demonstrate mastery of course materials and concepts through

- 1. Successful performance in reading tests.
- 2. Successful completion of the summative essay on the Seven Years War.

Unit 3: The Age of Revolution

Goals:

Students will understand:

1. The causes and outcomes of the American, French, and Haitian Revolutions.
2. The causes and outcomes of the Wars of the Age of Revolution
3. The impact of The Age of Revolution on slavery
4. The spread of revolutionary ideals to Latin America

Students will demonstrate mastery of course materials and concepts through

1. Successful performance in reading tests.
2. Competent participation in the Trafalgar simulation.
3. Successful completion of the summative essay on the abolition of the slave trade.

Essential Content cont.: The more generalized skills required for this course are:

1. Reading for meaning
2. Expository writing
3. Oral Communication
4. Research
5. Appropriate technology use

The common habits of mind derived from the core competencies will be:

1. Approach questions from an interdisciplinary perspective.
2. Study problems, not eras.
3. Recognize the existence of multiple perspectives.
4. Construct graceful generalizations.
5. Evaluate the quality of evidence drawn from varied media.
6. Respect the integrity of academic behavior.

SSL Outcomes: In this course students will:

I.

A. Develop automaticity in skills, concepts, and processes that support and enable complex thought by:

Synthesizing and assessing information and ideas into a cogent argument in papers, presentations, maps, and discussions.

B. Construct questions which further understanding, forge connections, and deepen meaning by: Collaborating with peers, and discussing material in class, in order to build an understanding of history and to synthesize data into logical assertions.

C. Precisely observe phenomena and accurately record findings by:

Evaluating historical and contemporary interpretations of event, by compiling data, and by analyzing primary sources.

D. Evaluate the soundness and relevance of information and reasoning by:

Critically evaluating and synthesizing information used to form arguments in research papers; drawing conclusions from primary sources; evaluating the reasonableness of ideas presented in literature and discussions; Evaluating underlying assumptions of documents.

II.

B. Find and analyze ambiguities inherent within any set of textual, social, physical, or theoretical circumstances by:

Evaluating the underlying claims of historians, commentators, cartographers, and others as well as the sources for those claims.

III.

A. Use appropriate technologies as extensions of the mind by:

Using computers for completing work, finding materials, collaborating, constructing maps, websites, and/or data sets.

B. Recognize, pursue, and explain substantive connections within and among areas of knowledge by:

Connecting concepts between disciplines; Drawing upon earlier learning experiences in a new context.

IV.

A. Construct and support judgments based on evidence by:

Drawing appropriate conclusions and making generalizations based on reliable information in both discussions and writing.

B Write and speak with power, economy, and elegance by:

Communicating effectively in formal written work; Asking questions and explaining answers during discussions.