

Conrad Grebel University College
University of Waterloo

HIST 201
Columbus and After: New Worlds in the Americas
Winter 2022

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River.

Class Time: 1:00-2:20 p.m., Monday and Wednesday

Location: Conrad Grebel University College, Room 1208

* Until we are able to meet again in person, I will hold synchronous class meetings every Wednesday on Zoom (see more details below). Apart from assigned textbooks, all other course materials are available on LEARN.

Instructor: Dr. David Y. Neufeld

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Office Location: CGUC 2125

Office Phone: 519-885-0220 x24201

Office Hours: 2:30-4:00 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursday and by appointment

* Until in-person appointments are again possible, you can arrange virtual meetings with me on Zoom. See the course homepage on LEARN for details.

Course Description:

This course teaches methods of historical thinking and writing through the study of the worlds that Indigenous Americans, enslaved Africans, and European settlers created in the Americas between 1500-1700. We will trace the astonishing series of events that marked this period chronologically, examining early encounters, processes of conquest, and the development of political, religious, and economic institutions that structured life in European colonies and along their boundaries. Assigned materials—a wide range of primary source evidence and historical case studies—will allow us to compare human experience across the Americas. Throughout the course, we will focus particular attention on the range of responses of non-Europeans to colonialism and assess the significance of colonial history to public life today.

While introducing you to significant events, people, and ideas in the history of the colonial Americas, this course invites you to practice the techniques of historical research and interpretation yourselves. As historians in training, you will learn how to better discern the significance of primary sources, evaluate the arguments of other scholars, and formulate original conclusions about the past. History requires you to think critically, use information effectively, understand and value difference, and communicate well-informed arguments. This course will help you develop skills that you will continue to use in the future.

Course Format:

This course takes place during its own moment in history, marked by disruptions brought on by COVID-19. While I look forward to returning to the classroom with you all soon, I've made an effort to reorganize and deliver the course with our current (and hopefully temporary!) need to be apart in mind. Until we return to in-person instruction, we will keep every Wednesday meeting synchronous, gathering as a group on Zoom at the assigned class time. I will begin these sessions with a brief presentation (which I will record). However, we will privilege open, unrecorded discussion of assigned readings and other materials during this time. I will make all other course resources—including video lectures—available on LEARN. You may work through these when you are able, in accordance with the schedule laid out below. Should I become ill and need to miss our synchronous meeting, I may supplement listed resources on LEARN to ensure continuous progression through course topics.

In this way, I am confident we will have an excellent and rigorous learning experience with plenty of opportunities for collective interaction. I realize these conditions require patience and flexibility. I hope we can offer these to one another. If, at any point during the semester, you are unable to meet requirements laid out in this course outline, we can communicate about alternatives.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- A. Identify significant events, people, and structures in the early history of colonialism in the Americas.
- B. Assess the impact of contexts, values, and motivations on primary sources.
- C. Critique historical arguments through the evaluation of evidence.
- D. Analyze how and why narratives about the past gain credence.
- E. Formulate and revise arguments about change over time and present them persuasively in a variety of forms.

Required Texts:

Course textbooks are available through the W Store.

- Camila Townsend, *Fifth Sun: A New History of the Aztecs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).
- James Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
- All other required course readings will be posted under the “Content” tab on LEARN.

Course Requirements and Assessment:

Grades have become the dominant measure of the quality of student work. What was true before the pandemic has become even clearer now: the grades that instructors assign *also* reflect a host of factors outside of each student's control that have little to do with mastery of course content. Under current conditions of disruption, we will together participate in an experiment in un-grading, a practice of evaluation adopted by a growing number of university instructors convinced that standard grading practices can frustrate rather than encourage student learning. This is my intent: to use assessment as a more effective means to spur you towards achieving the course's learning objectives.

Concretely, this means that you will compile your work from this semester into a portfolio and assign your own final grade. (Details regarding the format of this portfolio are available on LEARN.) More broadly, it means that assessment will result from a process of self-reflection and dialogue with your peers and with me over the course of the semester. In addition to your weekly course journal (see below), this process will involve a mid-term survey, a one-on-one meeting with me in March, and a final written self-evaluation. To assist you, I will provide timely and substantive written feedback on your submitted work. Here, I have

provided you with a list of assignments, submission dates, suggested weight, and a grade scale. While I reserve the right to challenge or change your final grade, I don't foresee this being a common practice.

Task	Date of Submission	Suggested Weight
Quizzes (3)/Historical Practice Assignments/Class Participation	Quiz dates on LEARN	15%
Course Journal	Jan. 27; Mar. 3; Apr. 11	30%
Essay #1	Feb. 8	20%
Essay #2	Mar. 30	20%
Revised Essay	Apr. 11	15%

Total		100%

In my view, letter grades mean the following:

A+: signals work of the highest quality. The student demonstrates mastery of the course material and the development of skills in ways that concretely and consistently exceed course requirements.

A-: signals work of high quality. The student has completed all reading and written assignments and participated in group discussions in ways that demonstrate a strong grasp of course material and significant development of skills.

B: signals work of satisfactory quality. The student has met most course expectations and demonstrates notable comprehension of course material and skill development, while indicating areas in which they did not demonstrate mastery.

C: signals work of uneven quality. The student, for whatever reason, cannot demonstrate more than modest evidence of learning and skill development.

D: signals work of unsatisfactory quality. The student, for whatever reason, cannot demonstrate more than minimal evidence of learning and skill development.

F: signals that the student has not completed coursework.

University policy regarding grades and grading systems is available [here](#).

[In shaping this un-grading policy, I have drawn on the work of Jesse Stommel, Patrick Iber, and Mikki Brock, among others.]

Class Participation/Quizzes/Historical Practice Assignments:

I expect you to demonstrate active engagement with the course material in the following ways:

1. As is possible, participation in synchronous meetings (full attendance, attentiveness, and thoughtful engagement with peers and instructor in discussion) and completion of course video lectures and readings.
2. Completion of short skill-building historical practice assignments in class and on LEARN.
3. Three short answer quizzes (50 min.) on course content, assessed through LEARN.

Weekly Course Journal

An *informal* written reflection of 1-2 double-spaced pages/week in which you analyze course content. You may reflect on class discussion, respond to reading questions, raise your own queries, highlight significant themes, or evaluate scholars' methods and use of evidence. I would suggest using this journal in a way that helps you prepare for your essays.

Essays:

You will write three short essays over the course of the semester.

1. In *Fifth Sun*, Camila Townsend claims to have written “a new history of the Aztecs” by reinterpreting the nature and consequences of Nahua peoples’ early contacts with Europeans. In this essay, you will scrutinize Townsend’s claim, assessing the author’s interpretation of primary sources and her interaction with the work of other historians. You will draw on one academic or popular review of this book to support your analysis (1000 words).
2. In his study of the life of Domingos Álvarez, James Sweet carefully reconstructs how the particularities of colonialism in Brazil shaped Black people’s lives. In this essay, you will compare and contrast how colonial social structures in a *different* region of the Americas constrained the experience of enslaved Africans or their descendants. You will draw on at least one primary and one secondary source to do so (1000 words).
3. In response to qualitative feedback from a peer and the instructor, you will substantively revise one of your first two essays (1500 words).

Course Outline:

All readings should be completed before the meeting date for which they are assigned.

I. Course Introduction

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Jan. 5	Course Outline, Questions, and Approaches	

CONTACT

II. Antecedents: The Americas, Africa, and Europe in the Fifteenth Century

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Jan. 10	An Infinity of Nations: The Americas before Contact	Townsend, Introduction, Ch. 1 & 2
Jan. 12	The Early African Atlantic	Gomes Eannes de Azurara, <i>The Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea</i> (c. 1453)
Jan. 17	Origins of European Expansion	Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)

III: First and Second Encounters

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Jan. 19	Imagining the Other	Townsend, Ch. 3 & 4 Excerpts from the journal of Christopher Columbus (1492)
Jan. 24	Conquests and Realms I: Iberian Invasions	Townsend, Ch. 5 & 6
Jan. 26	Epidemics and Colonial Violence: Biological Catastrophe	Jeffrey Ostler, “Disease Has Never Just Been Disease for Native Americans,” <i>The Atlantic</i>
Jan. 31	Conquests and Realms II: Rituals of Possession in North America	The <i>Requerimiento</i> (1510); “Royal Patent to the Sieur de Monts” (1603)

COLONIAL INTERFACES

IV: Conversions

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Feb. 2	The Spiritual Conquest	Townsend, Ch. 7 & 8, Epilogue
Feb. 7	The Missionary Missionized	Extirpation of Idolatry and the Search for the <i>Santuario Grande</i> of Iguaque (Colombia, 1595); <i>Jesuit Relations</i> from New France (1632-1637)

V: Consumption

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Feb. 9	Confronting a Material New World	A Gaspesian Man Defends His Way of Life (1641) Podcast: Interview with David Silverman, "Thundersticks: Firearms and the Violent Transformation of Native America," <i>Ben Franklin's World</i>
Feb. 14	Colonial Landscapes: Plants and Animals	Town Council Records on Deforestation in Uyumbicho (Quito, 1553-96)
Feb. 16	Production and Consumption in a New Global Economy	Kris Lane, "Potosí: The First Global City," <i>Aeon</i>
Feb. 28	Competition and Conflict Among Seaborne Empires	Sweet, Introduction, Ch. 1
Mar. 2	Bondage I: West Africa, the Americas, and the Atlantic Slave Trade	Sweet, Ch. 2 Database: slavevoyages.org
Mar. 8	Bondage II: The Atlantic Plantation Complex and Cultures of Slavery	Sweet, Ch. 3 & 4 "Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora"

VI: Sex, Gender, and the Body

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Mar. 10	Women and Men in the Making of Vast Early America	Sweet, Ch. 5 & 6 Inquisition Records from New Spain, "Bigamy, Polygamy, and Crimes against the Sacrament of Matrimony"
Mar. 15	Student Meetings	
Mar. 17	Student Meetings	
Mar. 22	Colonial Racecraft	Sweet, Ch. 7 & 8 Casta Paintings

VII: Resistance

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Mar. 24	Black Freedom in the Americas	Sweet, Ch. 9-10 Podcast: Interview with Jessica Johnson, "Slavery and Freedom in French Louisiana," <i>Ben Franklin's World</i>
Mar. 29	Insurrections, Revolts, and Rebellions	Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address; Metacom Relates Wampanoag

Schedule	Topic	Readings
		Grievances against the Colonists of New England (1675); Pontiac Calls for War (1763)

LEGACIES

Schedule	Topic	Readings
Mar. 31	“Firsting and Lasting”: Myths of Indigenous Extinction	Podcast: Interview with Jean O’Brien, “Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England,” <i>Indigenous Politics</i>
Apr. 5	The “History Wars”: Colonial Encounters and National Myths	Ian Milligan and Thomas Peace, “It is Time to End the History Wars,” <i>Active History</i> ; selections from “The 1619 Project”; Lauren Michele Jackson, “The 1619 Project and the Demands of Public History,” <i>New Yorker</i>

Course Policies

Style and Submission Guidelines and Policy on Late Work

All individual writing assignments should be uploaded as Microsoft Word documents to appropriate submission folders under the “Assignments” tab on the course LEARN page by 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Please save your assignment submission receipts (that arrive via email) until the assignment has been returned to you.

Submission deadlines are firm, but I will make accommodations at my discretion. If you anticipate difficulties in submitting your work by a deadline, please be in touch with me as soon as you can.

All written assignments should be double-spaced and use 12-point font and one-inch margins. When direct citations to sources are necessary, please use footnotes in accordance with The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th edition. Consult the Chicago Style Citation Quick Guide at

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html. Further information and links to sample citations are available here: https://lib.uwaterloo.ca/web/online-reference-shelf?toc_id=14.

Information on Plagiarism Detection

Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.

Academic Integrity

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the [Office of Academic Integrity webpage](#) for more information.

Discipline

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

Grievance

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances](#), Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Appeals

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72 - Student Appeals](#).

Note for Students with Disabilities

The [AccessAbility Services](#) office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (NH 1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

Mental Health Support

All of us need a support system. The faculty and staff in Arts encourage students to seek out mental health support if they are needed.

On Campus

Due to COVID-19 and campus closures, services are available only online or by phone.

- Counselling Services: counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- [MATES](#): one-to-one peer support program offered by the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Counselling Services
- Health Services Emergency service: located across the creek from Student Life Centre

Off campus, 24/7

- [Good2Talk](#): Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- Grand River Hospital: Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 6880
- [Here 24/7](#): Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- [OK2BME](#): set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online on the Faculty of Arts [website](#)

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources \(PDF\)](#)

Download the [WatSafe app](#) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information