

Alexander Hamilton's Atlantic World, 1750-1810
HIS 191



Instructor: Katrina Ponti
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Office Hours: By Appointment

Class: July 2, 2018- August 10, 2018
Meliora 206
MTWR
1-3:15pm

Objective:

Playing on the recent popularity of *Hamilton: the Musical*, this class will take an in-depth look at the historical context of the musical as well as the wider world in which Hamilton and his contemporaries lived. It is important for Americans to understand the historical milieu of the musical and to draw connections between our common past and the culture of the present. We will use Alexander Hamilton as a vehicle to discuss larger themes in Atlantic history, including maritime life, migration, rebellion (revolution), transatlantic economy and slavery. Hamilton's action-packed life occurred at the nexus of great social, cultural intellectual and political change in the early modern Atlantic world, all movements that connected Hamilton's upbringing, thought processes and ultimate demise to larger, transnational currents. Among other edifying activities such as lyrical analysis of the musical, and a field trip to the Holland Land Office, we will read primary documents to let Hamilton speak for himself through his own writings. Students will learn to be active discussion leaders, improve their writing, and learn to critically analyze primary documents. Students will be able to distinguish the historical voice from the license of the musical and be able to see the value in each. Students will gain a deep understanding for the changing world that surrounded Alexander Hamilton, to distinguish its characteristics, main events, and key individuals. Students will recognize Hamilton as one actor of many on the Atlantic stage.

Class Participation: Students are expected to attend every class, read the assigned material, and come prepared to talk about what they have read. Since this course is a condensed summer session, class time will be a combination of lecture, discussion, audiovisual material, and other activities. Readings are to be completed before class on the day that they are noted. Class participation is worth twenty percent (20%) of the student's grade.

Writing Assignments: Students will complete two assignments over the course of the session.

Assignment 1: A major facet of Atlantic history was the circulation of information. One major way in which this information moved was through newspapers. Research a newspaper article from Hamilton's adopted home in New York City during pivotal years in his life; 1776, 1789, or 1800. The student will write a 5-6-page paper describing the context of the article, its content, and reasoning for its importance to this period. In class, we will explore the newspaper databases available from the library and discuss ways historians use historical newspapers to uncover the mentalities of an era. This will be thirty percent (30%) of the student's grade. **Due by email July 21st at 11:59pm.**

Assignment 2: This project will be tailored to the student, based upon their interests, major and academic goals. The student must discuss this potential topic with me during office hours before the end of the second week of class. This project will serve as the final exam for the course and will be fifty percent (50%) of the student's grade. **Due by email on August 10 at 11:59pm.** However, the student will be expected to present their project to the class on **August 9.**

Final Grade Breakdown:

Class Participation:	20%
Assignment 1:	30%
Assignment 2--	
Presentation:	10%
Full Project:	40%
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	100%

Academic Honesty: Cheating and plagiarizing will not be tolerated under any circumstances. If you have any questions as to the University of Rochester's policies on academic integrity, please see <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/undergraduates.html>. If you are ever unclear as to what my expectations are regarding academic honesty on a given assignment, please do not hesitate to ask

Required Book: Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (2005).

Class Schedule

July 2: Introduction to Alexander Hamilton

We will be watching PBS' *Great Performances: Hamilton's America*

July 3: Introduction to the Atlantic World in 1750

Read Introduction in Toying Falola and Kevin Roberts, *The Atlantic World* (Indiana University Press, 2008) pp ix-xiv **and** Alison Games "Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges and Opportunities." Both are on Blackboard.

We will be going over the historical newspaper databases in class today for your first assignment, bring laptop.

July 4: **No Class**

July 5: Forgotten Spots in the Caribbean: Island and Maritime Life

Read Chernow Chapter 1 **and** Skim Jordaan and Wilson "The Eighteenth-Century Danish, Dutch, and Swedish Free Ports in the Northeastern Caribbean" on Blackboard

July 9: In Charge of a Trading Charter: Merchants and Economics in the Atlantic

Read Chernow Chapter 2

July 10: Coming to America: Atlantic Migration

Read David Eltis, "Free and Coerced Migrations." On Blackboard.

July 11: Hamilton's New York City: Port Cities

Read Chernow Chapter 3 **and** Goodfriend, "New York City In 1772" on Blackboard

We will try our hand at making 18th century-style coffee.

July 12: Atlantic American Society: The Schuyler Sisters

Read Chernow Chapter 7 **and** Cook's "Women in Port Cities" on Blackboard

We will have a Schuyler-style tea party in class.

July 16: Hero and a Scholar: The Atlantic Enlightenment

Read Jonathan Israel, Introduction from *Democratic Enlightenment*. On Blackboard

Visit Stanford's digital history project, *Mapping the Republic of Letters*:
<http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/#> Bring laptop.

July 17: Atlantic Empires

Read Elliott, "Empires in Crisis," on Blackboard

July 18: Rebellions and Revolutions

Read Chernow Chapter 4 **and** Israel, "American Revolution." On Blackboard
 (for the full Revolution you are welcome to read chapters 4-9)

We will look at current, Atlantic-history inspired discussions of the Revolution. Bring laptop to class.

<http://www.common-place-archives.org/vol-14/no-03/burnard/#.WzFxSqdKjIU>

July 19: Espionage

Listen to *Stuff You Missed in History Class* "Spy on the Inside, Episodes 1 and 2" on Blackboard

We will watch an episode of *Turn* in class

Assignment #1 is due by 11:59pm on July 21st

July 23: Nation Building and Constitutions

Read Chernow Chapters 13 and 14

We will play the "Deal or Duel" card game in class

July 24: Hamilton vs. Jefferson: The Treasury and the State

Read Chernow Chapters 15 and 16

Must meet me to discuss final project ideas by today.

July 25: Hamilton, Laurens and Atlantic Slavery

Read James Oliver Horton, "Alexander Hamilton: Slavery and Race in a Revolutionary Generation"

We will watch portions of Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s "Africa's Great Civilizations: Part 5, the Atlantic Age."

We will also explore the Slave Voyages Database, bring laptop.

July 26: Piracy and the Revenue Cutter Service

Read Chapters 1 and 2 of “Early History of the United States Revenue Marine Service” Link on Blackboard.

July 30: The 10 Duel Commandments: Hamilton’s Demise

Read Freeman, “Duelling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel” on Blackboard **and** Chernow Chapters 41-43

July 31: The Atlantic Goes Inland: Hamilton’s Interests in Western New York

Read the correspondence of Hamilton with Theophile Cazenove on Blackboard. Cazenove’s letters are in French, if you open the link in Chrome, the translate feature should give you an ok translation, at least enough for you to get a sense of what he’s telling Hamilton.

August 1: **Fieldtrip to Holland Land Grant Museum**

August 2: How Contemporaries saw Hamilton

No reading, work on final project

August 6: How Hamilton Saw the World

No reading, work on final project

August 7: Memory- Hamilton in Death

Read Chernow Prologue **and** Epilogue

August 8: Memory- Hamilton in Our Life

Read Wright, RE, “Hamilton from the Perspective of Financial History, **and** Caroline Hamilton, “The Erotic Charisma of Alexander Hamilton.” On Blackboard

August 9: Atlantic World Feast, Wrap up, and Final project presentations.

We will watch Lin Manuel Miranda’s *Drunk History* episode on Hamilton

August 10: Final Project Due by 11:59pm