

HURON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
HIS1808G: A Few Words that Changed the World

Meetings: W18 – Tuesdays: 1:30-2:30
W18 – Thursdays: 12:30-2:30

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 12:30 or by appointment.

Contact policy: I am generally in the office from 9 to 5. As long as my door is open, *you are welcome (and encouraged) to come in* and chat about any questions, concerns or aspects of the course you find interesting. I try to return messages left by phone or email as soon as possible; however, due to my teaching and research responsibilities it sometimes takes me some time to reply. Expect at least a twenty-four-hour weekday response time.

Course Description: *A Few Words that Changed the World* uses short and influential historical documents to introduce students to the study of history. Designed for students intending to major in history, each week students will study a new primary document that had global reach and implication in the daily lives of millions of people, living in both the past and present.

Goal: Over our time together students will learn about significant moments of change over the past 500 years in global history while also learning the basic skills required for university study.

Objectives: By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- knowledgeably discuss key moments and influential texts in the global history.
- articulate how each of the documents we study shapes the world in which we live today.
- understand how to read and apply historical evidence.
- understand how to read and apply scholarly literature.

Evaluation:

- Mini Essays: 30%
- Bibliography Assignments: 30%
- Participation: 20%
- Exam: 20%

Assessment:

1. **Mini-Essays:** On the last day of each unit, you will submit a short 500-word essay answering the following prompts:
 - **Unit 1:** Was Christianity a determining factor shaping European expansion?
 - **Unit 2:** How had ideas about European empire changed by the end of the eighteenth century?
 - **Unit 3:** To what extent did the nineteenth century mark continuities with Europe's sixteenth-century expansion?

A good essay will be organized around a clear thesis statement and draw on the documents and journal articles that we studied in the unit. A complete essay will have about six to eight paragraphs and – whenever drawing specifically on the documents we have studied – will use footnote citations. Remember that the content of your paragraphs is determined by your topic sentences. Each sentence that follows the topic sentence presents evidence and analysis helping us understand the topic sentence. It is the topic sentence that develops the thesis statement.

2. **Annotated Bibliographies:** On the last day of each unit, you will submit an annotated bibliography with one book review and one journal article that help us better understand each document's historical context. Annotations are specific explanations about why you chose the specific work listed. Each annotation will be evaluated based on its description of the book or article you found. It will also provide an explanation about how it informs your understanding of the document we have studied. This should take at least three sentences. *Annotations will only be graded if your bibliographic formatting is correct.*

Plagiarism: In this course, you will receive a zero for work that you have copied from another student or source; likewise, you will receive a zero if you submit work that you have submitted elsewhere. You can familiarize yourself with our rules about academic misconduct here: https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20

Participation: This course is based on collaborative learning. It is expected that you will attend our Tuesday classes prepared to talk knowledgeably about the historical source assigned for that week. You should be prepared to share with the class your reflections about:

- Who wrote the document and why?
- What is this document about?
- What does this document tell us about the society in which it was produced? (values, etc...)
- Why do you think that I put this document on the syllabus? How did it “make” the modern world?

Our Thursday classes will begin with a presentation placing the document in its historical context. We will then explore the assigned readings. You should come prepared to discuss:

- The argument each author is making?
- The evidence upon which their argument is built?
- How the article helps us understand the document under study?

At the end of each class, I will assign you a grade out of 10 based on your oral participation. I will also assign a grade out of 10 for your use of Hypothes.is annotations, which is a tool we will use to navigate our primary sources. The average of these grades will comprise your final participation grade.

Exam: The final exam will be essay-based and require that students consider the units comparatively while also reflecting on how historians use primary and secondary sources. The date of the exam will be set by the registrar's office.

The Texts

January 11: Course Introduction and Welcome

January 13: Thinking Like a Historian

Unit 1: *Christianity & Empire*

January 18/20: The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494)

- Robert J. Miller, "The Doctrine of Discovery" in Robert J. Miller et al. *Discovering Indigenous Lands: The Doctrine of Discovery in the English Colonies* (Oxford, 2010).

January 25/27: Letter of Nzinga Mbemba (Afonso I) of Kongo to the King of Portugal (1526)

- Kate Lowe, "'Representing' Africa: Ambassadors and Princes from Christian Africa to Renaissance Italy and Portugal, 1402-1608" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 17 (December 2007): 101–28.
doi:10.1017/S0080440107000552.

February 1/4: Edicts against Christianity (1587)

- Reinier H. Hesselink, "I Go Shopping in Christian Nagasaki: Entries from the Diary of a Mito Samurai, Ōwada Shigekiyo (1593)," *Bulletin of Portuguese / Japanese Studies* 1 (January 2015): 27–45.
http://cham.fcsch.unl.pt/ext/bpjs/files/02_Hesselink.pdf

Unit 2: *Empire & Revolution*

February 8/10: The Royal Proclamation of 1763

- John Borrows, "Wampum at Niagara: The Royal Proclamation, Canadian Legal History, and Self-Government," in *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equality, and Respect for Difference* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008)

February 15/17: The Treaty of Allahabad (1765)

- Robert Travers, "A British Empire by Treaty in Eighteenth-Century India," in Saliha Belmessous, *Empire by Treaty: Negotiating European Expansion, 1600-1900* (Oxford University Press, 2014)

February 22/24: Reading Week!

March 1/3: The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789)

- Joan Wallach Scott, “French Feminists and the Rights of ‘Man’: Olympe de Gouges’s Declarations,” *History Workshop* no. 28 (Autumn 1989): 1-21.

March 8/10: Constitutions of Haiti (1801-1805)

- Julia Gaffield, “Complexities of Imagining Haiti: A Study of National Constitutions, 1801-1807,” *Journal of Social History* (Fall 2007): 81-103.

Unit 3: *Empire, Race, and Gender*

March 15/17: Treaty of Nanjing (1842)

- Dong Wang, “Between Tribute and Unequal Treaties: How China Saw the Sea World in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *The Journal of the Historical Association*, vol 103 no 355 (Mar 2018): 262-285.

March 22/24: The Declaration of Rights and Sentiments (1848)

- Nancy Hewitt, “Re-Rooting American Women’s Activism: Global Perspectives on 1848” in Grimshaw et al., eds., *Women’s Rights and Human Rights* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), chap. 8.

March 29/31: The Origin of Species (1859) (excerpts)

- Gregory Claeys, “The ‘Survival of the Fittest’ and the Origins of Social Darwinism,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* vol. 61 no 2 (Apr 2000): 223-240.

April 5/7: General Act of the Conference of Berlin (1885)

- David Gordon, “Precursors to Red Rubber: Violence in the Congo Free State, 1885-1895,” *Past & Present* vol 236 no. 1 (Aug 2017): 133-168.