HIST 305: International History
Seminar: Monday, 9:30-12, REYN 130
Professor Bryan McCann
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Office hours: WF 11-12 and by appt.

Course Goals & Description

This course will analyze key phenomena in Global and International History from the Early Modern period through the recent past. Topics include the military rise of the West, the Atlantic Slave trade and its consequences, industrialization and inequality, the expansion of global capitalism and its discontents, the ecological framework of imperial expansion, and the emergence and evolution of the world's most popular sport and its attendant entertainment industry. Along the way, we will be guided by key questions: what causes global historical transitions? How do these differ from and relate to transitions at local, national and regional levels? Do individuals have any agency in such phenomena, or are they mere specks in the river of vast historical forces? How can we isolate and identify as a discrete global historical transition a process that unfolds in different ways in different places? Has the nature of such transitions changed profoundly in relatively recent history? How have people apparently marginalized or oppressed by global historical change shaped such change, requiring further investigation of the nature of this change? And lastly, what are the most effective strategies of narrative and organization for presenting an argument about such transitions?

The objectives of the course include a strong understanding of the large themes and movements that have shaped the modern world, a grasp of the nature of historiographical debates on these questions, the honing of scholarly analysis and prose, and the understanding of global historical change as a set of processes that have not simply expanded from center to periphery but that have often doubled back upon themselves, bringing the periphery to the center in ways that deeply alter both.

Each week’s seminar will be facilitated by one or two student leaders who will be responsible for researching the historiographical context for the week’s readings, presenting briefly on these findings and helping to guide discussion of the work in question.

Over the last half of the course, students will develop a research paper in consultation with the professor. Research topics will reflect on the broad themes of the course.

Reading List:

Parker, Geoffrey, The Military Revolution
Marks, Robert, *Origins of the Modern World*
Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*
McNeill, JR, *Mosquito Empires*
Bayly, Christopher, *The Birth of the Modern World*
Goldblatt, David, *The Ball is Round*
Yergin, Daniel, *The Prize*
Westad, Odd, *The Global Cold War*
Davis, Mike, *Planet of Slums*
Doug Saunders, *Arrival Cities*

**Evaluation:**
Weekly Journal (filed on Blackboard): 30%
Presentation and discussion leadership: 10%
Contribution: 25%
Final Paper: 35%

Note: Contribution means both regular attendance and conscientious, well-prepared participation in class discussion. Unexcused absences will be reflected in the contribution grade. It is imperative to the success of the course that you read thoroughly and carefully before seminar and arrive prepared to contribute.

**Schedule:**

8/29: Introductions, Photographs as documents
9/10: Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution*
9/17: Robert Marks, *Origins of the Modern World*
9/24: Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*
10/1: JR McNeill, *Mosquito Empires*
10/8: Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*
10/15: David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*
10/22: Daniel Yergin, *The Prize*
10/29: Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War*
11/5: Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*
11/12: Doug Saunders, *Arrival Cities*
11/19: Paper Workshops
11/26: Paper Workshops
12/3: Paper Workshops
12/10: Final Paper Due