

History 387.004 Global Microhistories
MW 12:00 pm – 1:15 pm
Krug Hall 242

Professor Joan C. Bristol

jbristol@gmu.edu

Robinson B 348

Office hour: Wednesday 1:30 pm - 2:30 pm (drop-in) and by appointment

In this class we will learn about individuals, groups of people, places, and events through engagingly-written narratives. We will also think about how such narratives are constructed. We will focus on the Atlantic World (Europe, Africa, Latin America, and British America) in the early modern period (1500-1800). Beyond the fun of learning about people's lives on an intimate level, reading these detailed histories allows us to understand larger historical events and processes from a personal perspective and gives us insight into groups and cultures that are not as well-represented in more traditional histories.

Books, available at the library and the GMU bookstore and other booksellers:

Davis, *Return of Martin Guerre*

Sparks, *Two Princes of Calabar*

Kierner, *Scandal at Bizarre*

Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices*

Assignments, with percentages of the total grade:

Class participation: 20%. This involves attending class and participating in class discussions (big group and/or small group discussions). If you are not comfortable with talking in class please see me – I can help!

Four quizzes: 5% each (20% total). These are simple “did you read this” quizzes based on the books we read for class. If you have done the reading you will not have any problem doing well on these quizzes.

Source identification; see description at the end of the syllabus: 20%

Two analytical papers, 5-7 pages: 20% each (40% total).

Class policies:

1) I expect you to arrive in class on time and stay for the entire class period. If you know that you will be late to class or that you need to leave early please let me know ahead of time.

2) Do not eat during class. (You may bring something to drink but don't spill it.)

3) If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Honor Code:

George Mason has an honor code and you are expected to adhere to it. It is as follows:

“To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>

If I suspect plagiarism or other forms of cheating I will submit my findings to the Honor Committee immediately. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism and other kinds of cheating. If you do not understand what constitutes plagiarism and cheating ask me for clarification.

Schedule:

Week 1 (January 20): Introductions (to each other and the topic).

Week 2 (January 25 & 27): What is microhistory?

Reading: István Szijártó, "Four Arguments for Microhistory," *Rethinking History*, 6:2, pp. 209-215 (JSTOR); Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History* 88:1, pp. 129-144 (JSTOR).
PAPER topic #1 handed out on Wednesday.

1/26 is the last day to add classes and the last day to drop without tuition penalty.

Week 3: (February 1 & 3): Martin Guerre

Reading: Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*
QUIZ #1 on Wednesday

2/2 is the last day to drop with 33% tuition penalty.

Week 4: (February 8 & 9): Martin Guerre

Reading: Watch *The Return of Martin Guerre (Le Retour de Martin Guerre)*, the 1982 movie.
We have a copy on reserve in the library and it is also available on You Tube.
PAPER #1 due on Wednesday

Week 5: (February 15 & 17): Martin Guerre

Reading: "Martin Luther, Martin Guerre, and Ways of Knowing," in *Common Knowledge*, 20:1 (2014): 4-8; Robert Finlay, "The Refashioning of Martin Guerre," *American Historical Review* 93:3 (June 1988): 553-571; Natalie Zemon Davis, "On the Lane," *American Historical Review* 93:3 (June 1988): 553-571. (Both on JSTOR).

2/19 is the final drop deadline (67% tuition penalty).

Week 6 (February 22 & 24): Two Princes of Calabar

Reading: Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*
QUIZ #2 on Wednesday

2/22-3/25 Selective withdrawal period.

Week 7 (February 29 & March 2): Equiano

Reading: Chapters 1 and 2 of Equiano, Olaudah, *The interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by himself.* Dublin, 1791. THIS VERSION IS ONLINE AT THE LIBRARY WEBSITE. You may also borrow a different version from the library or buy any version you want – this book has been published many times. There is a Kindle edition that is 99 cents. As long as you read the first two chapters it does not matter which version you use.

Week 8 (March 7 & 9): SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (March 14 & 16): Working with primary sources (using my work as an example!)

Reading: Joan Bristol, "Ana de Vega: Seventeenth-Century Afro-Mexican Healer," in *The Human Tradition in Latin America* (2013), pp. 199-214, and Joan Bristol, "Afro-Mexican Sainly Devotion in a Mexico City Alley," in *Expanding the Diaspora: Africans to Colonial Latin America* (2012), pp. 114-132. **I will send you pdfs of these readings.**

PAPER topic #2 handed on Wednesday.

Week 10 (March 21 & 23): NO CLASS. Work on source identification.

Week 11 (March 28 & 30): Bizarre

Reading: Kierner, *Scandal at Bizarre*, vii – 89.

Week 12 (April 4 & 6): Bizarre

Reading: Kierner, *Scandal at Bizarre*, 91 – 172.

QUIZ #3 on Wednesday.

PAPER #2 due on Monday.

Week 13 (April 11 & 13): Malintzin

Reading: Townsend, xi – 29.

AND 1) Dona Marina, Cortes' Translator: Painting, The Dream of Malinche, Ruíz, Antonio; 2) Dona Marina, Cortes' Translator: Nonfiction, Octavio Paz; 3) Doña Marina, Cortes' Translator: Poem, La Malinche; 4) Dona Marina, Cortes' Translator: Poem, Como Duele, Sosa-Riddell, Adaljiza; 5) Dona Marina, Cortes' Translator: Painting, Santa Barraza 12) Dona Marina, Cortes' Translator: Sculpture, Jimmie Durham. These are all found here:
<http://chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/sources.php?function=find&area=americas>

Week 14 (April 18 & 20): Malintzin

Reading: Townsend, 30 – 147.

Week 15 (April 25 & 27): Malintzin and presentations

Reading: Townsend 148-226.

In class please briefly describe your source and explain how you would use the source to write a microhistory.

QUIZ #4 on Wednesday

Last day (May 2): Presentations on source.

Briefly describe your source and explain how you would use the source to write a microhistory.

SOURCE IDENTIFICATION DUE. Please email it to me in a Word document.

SOURCE IDENTIFICATION ASSIGNMENT (5-7 pages):

The microhistories that we are reading this semester use primary sources in a variety of ways. Some microhistories focus deeply on one source to provide the bulk of the narrative and use other sources to fill in background information, while other microhistories use a variety of primary sources to tell a story. For the final project I would like you to find a primary source that you think would be appropriate to use as the basis for a microhistory. The library subscribes to many databases of primary sources and you may make an appointment with a librarian if you need help using them. Please provide the citation for your source, describe how you found it, summarize its contents, and discuss how you would use it to write a microhistory (you do not actually have to write the microhistory). Your source can be from any time period or region.