

# HIST 125-021: INTRODUCTION TO GLOBAL HISTORY

Fall 2023

Professor Matt Karush

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Office hours: W, 2:00-4:00 & by  
appointment

Course time and location:

Wed 4:30-7:10 pm

Planetary Hall 120

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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In this course we explore the sweeping historical changes that created today's world. Beginning around 1250, we trace key processes reshaping the politics, cultures, and economies of various regions. While Europe and the United States are part of our focus, we primarily consider Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Each of these geographic regions became enmeshed in a global system affected by far-reaching religious transformations, mercantile activity, industrial growth and imperialism/colonialism. Finally, we study the influences of modern nationalism, Cold War dynamics, and anti-colonial movements in the twentieth century. By the end of the semester, students should have a grasp of the major trends underlying six centuries of world history.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Identify and explain major developments in global history from the pre-modern period (before 1400 CE) to the present.
2. Communicate a historical argument through writing using a variety of primary and secondary sources.
3. Apply historical knowledge and historical thinking to contemporary global issues.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

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These titles are available at the GMU Bookstore in the Johnson Center (and elsewhere).

1. James Carter and Richard Warren, *Forging the Modern World*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford University Press, 2022. (Abbreviated as FMW below)
2. Henry B. Lovejoy, *Prieto: Yorùbá Kingship in Colonial Cuba during the Age of Revolutions*. University of North Carolina Press, 2019. (Abbreviated as Prieto below)

These titles are available for purchase at the GMU bookstore in the Johnson Center. If you buy them elsewhere, be sure to get the third edition of FMW.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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**Attendance and Participation:** *Students are expected to attend all meetings of the course.* The midterm and final examinations require knowledge of course lectures and readings. This course

is structured to reward students who come to class, complete their reading, participate in discussions, and stay on top of their assignments. All students are expected to participate in class discussions. To do this effectively you need to have read and thought about the assigned reading before you come to class. In class, be prepared to ask questions and think critically about the material. If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of the group, please talk to me after class and explain your situation.

**Blackboard:** You will use the course site on Blackboard to access readings, submit work, and check your grades.

**Reading:** The readings for this class include a textbook and a historical monograph (a work of historical scholarship). The amount of reading varies each week. Most weeks, the reading is modest and should not take you more than a couple hours. However, note that the workload is significantly higher between weeks 4 and 6, when you will be reading *Prieto* and writing your paper on that book. Plan accordingly.

In the course schedule below, “FMW” indicates the textbook *Forging the Modern World*. “Prieto” indicates the monograph, *Prieto: Yorùbá Kingship in Colonial Cuba during the Age of Revolutions*.

All additional required course readings are listed in the schedule below. For two of these, I have provided links; the rest are available on our course’s Blackboard site. Go to [mymason.gmu.edu](http://mymason.gmu.edu) and click on the “courses” tab and then on HIST 125-021. Clicking on “Course Content,” at the left of the screen, you will find a folder containing PDFs of the reading. These readings are either texts written by historians or primary sources.

Before reading, be sure to note who wrote the text and when. Also, for primary sources drawn from edited collections, be sure to distinguish between the headnote written by an editor and the document itself.

**Discussion Responses:** Half of each class session is dedicated to discussions of the assigned reading. Over the course of the semester, each student must write **five** short discussion responses (about 250-300 words). In your response, you must do three things:

- 1) identify a historical argument that came up during class discussion (why a specific change happened, what effect a specific event or process had, or who were the main actors responsible for a particular development).
- 2) say who made the argument (it could be a historian, me, or one of your classmates) AND explain it.
- 3) quote a specific passage in the course readings for the week that supports or refutes the argument and explain how it does that.

Discussion responses may be submitted any time before the next class session. You may not submit a discussion response after one week has passed since the discussion. If you only do four, you will get a 0 for the one you skipped. If you do six, I will drop your lowest grade. Use parenthetical citations to cite your sources (author, page #).

**Prieto Paper** Students will write one paper of 3-4 pages based on the book *Prieto*. The due date is listed in the course schedule below, and the assignment itself is attached to this syllabus. The goal of this paper is to allow students to grapple with the course material and to improve their college-level writing. Late papers will be marked down a half-letter grade (from A to A-, for example) for every day they are late.

**Examinations:** The course will have in-class midterm and final examinations. Both will have identifications and essay questions. For both examinations, I will distribute a review sheet.

## GRADING

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Final course grades will be calculated according to the following breakdown:

Discussion Responses (5)	25%
<i>Prieto</i> Paper	25%
Midterm	20%
Final	30%

To do well in this course you must come to class, read weekly, take part in discussions, and work hard on your papers.

A+ = 97-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D = 60-69
A = 93-96	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	F = 59 and below
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	

## A NOTE ON CLASSROOM DECORUM

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Students should feel free to bring laptops, ipads, etc to class in order to take notes. However, please stay off social media, email, and the web (unless you are googling a name or event that was mentioned in lecture or discussion). The material we will be discussing in class is complex; it requires your full attention. More important, the images on your screen are likely to distract students sitting behind you. If you (like me) are one of those people who will find it hard not to surf the web, then leave the laptop at home. Similarly, if you stayed up late the night before and you know you are unlikely to be able to stay awake, skip class and get the notes from a classmate. Sleeping students are a distraction to others. Finally, and most importantly, **DO NOT TEXT OR CHECK INSTAGRAM** in class. If you have a personal emergency to deal with, quietly leave class and go deal with it.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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### Week 1: Introduction

8/23 Lecture: Before European Hegemony, The World System 1250-1350

Read: John M. Hobson, "Countering the Eurocentric Myth of the Pristine West: Discovering the Oriental West," *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge, 2004), excerpt\*

### Week 2: The Decline of the Old-World Order

8/30 Lecture: Internal Changes in the World System, 1350-1450

Read: FMW, ch. 1

Ma Huan, "On Calicut, India"

Anon., "Journal of the First Voyage of Vasco da Gama"

"Ibn Battuta describes Chinese Ships on the Indian Coast,"

<https://bridgingcultures-muslimjourneys.org/items/show/84>

### Week 3: Exploration and Conquest

9/6 Lecture: The Motives of Discovery and the Columbian Exchange

Read: FMW, Ch. 2

"The Broken Spears"

Bernal Díaz, "The Conquest of New Spain"

Bartolomé de Las Casas, "The Devastation of the Indies"

### Week 4

9/13 **[Class Canceled] Read Prieto!**

### Week 5: The New Global Economy

9/20 Lecture: Sugar, Slaves, Textiles, Silver

Read: FMW, ch. 4 **and** 139-44

Prieto, 1-77

### Week 6: The Atlantic Revolutions

9/27 Lecture: Independence Movements in Haiti and Spanish America (1800-1825)

Read: FMW, 144-54 **and** ch. 6

Prieto, 78-145

**Prieto Paper due Monday, Oct 2 by 5:00PM**

### Week 7: The Rise of European Domination

10/4 Lecture: The Industrial Revolution and the Rise of the British Empire

Read: FMW, ch. 7 **and** 231-242

Jack Goldstone, "Why Europe?"

Lynda Norene Shaffer, "China, Technology, and Change"

Arnold Pacey, "Asia and the Industrial Revolution"

Peter Stearns, "The Industrial Revolution Outside the West"

### Week 8: Midterm

10/11 **Midterm (1st half of class):** bring two blank, 8.5 x 11-inch blue books to the test

Read: FMW, 215-230

### Week 9: High European Imperialism and White Settler Colonialism

10/18 Lecture: High Imperialism, 1870-1900

Read: FMW, 245-257

George Orwell, "Burmese Days"

Chinua Achebe, "Things Fall Apart"

Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden"

### Week 10: Globalization and Its Discontents

10/25 Lecture: Trouble in the Global System: Anti-imperialism, Inequality, and the Rise of Japan 1895-1945

Read: FMW, 258-75

Theodore Von Laue, "The World Revolution of Westernization"

Fukuzawa Yukichi, "Good-bye Asia"

"Images from Japan"

Mohandas K. Gandhi, "Hind Swaraj"

### Week 11: World Wars and Depression

11/1 Lecture: The American Century and the Rise of Fascism

Read: FMW, ch. 10 **and** 11

Timothy Snyder, "Holocaust: The Ignored Reality"

Robert Wilson, "Letters from Nanking"

"President Truman's Announcement"

Akihiro Takahashi, "Memory of Hiroshima"

### Week 12: The Cold War I

11/8 Lecture: Latin America in the Cold War

Read: FMW, ch. 12

Heonik Kwon, "Origins of the Cold War"

Ho Chi Minh, "The Vietnamese Declaration of Independence"

Soviet Telegram on Cuba

US Transcript and Telegram on Argentina

### Week 13: The Cold War II

11/15 Lecture: Decolonization

Read: Aime Cesaire, "Discourse on Colonialism"

Kwame Nkrumah speeches

Jawaharlal Nehru speech

President Nasser speech: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/speech-president-nasser-alexandria-july-26-1956-extract>

11/22 **No Class** (Thanksgiving)

### Week 14: Globalization

11/29 Lecture: Is Globalization New? What Does History Tell Us About the Present?

Read FMW, ch. 13 **and** epilogue

Final Exam review

Final Exam: Wednesday, December 6, 4:30-7:10

You must bring two blank, 8.5 x 11-inch blue books to the test.

### ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class.

Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes.

(Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website, [registrar.gmu.edu](http://registrar.gmu.edu).)

Last day to add a class: 8/28

Last day to drop a class with no tuition penalty: 9/5

Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. For selective withdrawal procedures, see <https://registrar.gmu.edu/topics/selective-withdrawal/>

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. For the purposes of this course, make sure that you understand what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. You may not present anyone else's words or ideas as if they were yours. If I suspect that you have, I will immediately turn your case over to the Honor Committee.

### MASON EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must use their MasonLIVE email account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

### OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

### WRITING CENTER

For help with your writing, please use the services of the Writing Center: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>; [wcenter@gmu.edu](mailto:wcenter@gmu.edu)

### COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS)

(703) 993-2380;

<http://caps.gmu.edu>

### UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

**Paper**  
**Henry B. Lovejoy, Prieto:**  
***Yorùbá Kingship in Colonial Cuba during the Age of Revolutions***

**Background:** The territory of modern Nigeria witnessed the rise and fall of multiple political empires in the period before European imperialism. Among these was the Yoruba Oyo Empire, which was the most powerful state in the region from the mid-17th to the late 18th century. The Yoruba are an ethnic group of southwestern and north-central Nigeria. Their religion includes the central concept of the *orisas*, multiple manifestations or avatars of the Supreme God. This region was a major hub in the Atlantic slave trade. As a result, Yoruba peoples and cultural practices can be found throughout the Americas, especially in Brazil and in Cuba, where the Spanish called them Lucumí. Henry Lovejoy's *Prieto* is a biography of Juan Nepomuceno Prieto (1773-1835), who was born in West Africa, enslaved by a Dahomey army allied with the Oyo king, and sold to British slave traders. Lucky enough to be enslaved in Havana rather than on a plantation, Prieto enlisted in the Spanish military and earned his freedom. He then became a leader of a major Lucumí *cabildo*, a "legally sanctioned and church-sponsored socioreligious brotherhood."

**Assignment: Choose one of the two options below.**

**Option 1:** This book is a microhistory. Lovejoy attempts to use the life of one individual to illuminate major historical events and processes, including the European/African encounter in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Atlantic slave trade, the Haitian Revolution, the War of 1812, the "second slavery," Spanish colonialism, British abolitionism, and the resistance of the enslaved. Pick three of these episodes or processes and explain how Prieto's story changes our understanding of them. Be specific!

**Option 2:** According to Henry Lovejoy, Prieto's life reveals the complex workings of "creolization," the mixing together of different cultures to create a new culture. How did this process shape nineteenth-century Cuba? Was it a form of resistance, a strategy for survival, or both? Hint: Be sure to be specific about what cultures were mixing, where, and when; this book is NOT about the mixture of something called European culture with something called African culture.

**Due: Monday, Oct 2 by 5:00PM**, via Blackboard

**Length:** about 4 pages (double-spaced, 12-point font)

You have three goals in this assignment:

1. Evaluate and argue significant points based on your own analysis.
2. Use evidence to support your point of view.
3. Deepen your understanding of the Atlantic slave trade and the history of the Yoruba in Cuba.

**Citing Sources**

Use of specific evidence is vital to this paper, and you must indicate from where in the reading you have taken quotes or language. Include parenthetical references to specific page numbers.

This paper requires no outside reading. Do NOT use any sources that have not been assigned for this class; it is perfectly possible to write an excellent paper relying solely on the Lovejoy book.

**Writing Style and Essay Structure**

Your essay should have a clear introduction that states your thesis and a conclusion that wraps up the paper by either explaining why your argument is important or by suggesting some further implication of your argument. Use one paragraph per idea, and make sure that you have sufficient evidence to support each of your statements. When writing about the past and accounts written in the past, use the past tense. For most people, writing clearly means using short sentences and words that they know well.

Historical writing uses the active voice because it explains who is responsible and what they have done. Passive voice does not. Avoid the passive voice. The most famous example of passive voice: "Mistakes were made." Historians want to know who made the mistakes and why. Active: "Jones made mistakes because he misjudged the abilities of his rivals." Avoid introductions and conclusions that say nothing: "In conclusion, these were three moments that the book illuminates. Reading about Prieto shows us how ordinary people were affected."

Your paper must be double-spaced, but avoid extra spaces between paragraphs. Try to stay away from long quotations (most of the words should be your own), but if you do use one, it should be indented and single spaced.

Do not use AI for this assignment.