

AS.100.384 | Spring 2019  
W 1:30–4:00pm, Latrobe 107  
Professor: Zachary Dorner ([zdorner@jhu.edu](mailto:zdorner@jhu.edu))  
Office Hours: M, 2–4pm, Gilman 330D

## Intoxicated: Commodities & Globalization in the Early Modern World

### Description

The early modern Atlantic world experienced an influx of goods that opened new mental possibilities about nature, expanded acquisitive desires, and ushered in an era of global commerce. Consider how a bright bolt of cloth or a fragrant spice could enliven the senses and awaken the mind. The world suddenly seemed more connected and globalized than ever before. Yet, these developments also had consequences: the large-scale enslavement and relocation of human beings and the violent subjugation of local populations in the name of empire, for example. Thinking about the early modern world as highly connected shows that connectivity could have different meanings and outcomes. A wider range of goods from far-flung places entered the grasp of a larger swath of society, but from where, by what means, and at what cost? We will see that this was a connected, exploitative, and political world—that there were winners and losers—and consider the logistics and consequences of consumerism in the context of expanding empires. Often, coming face-to-face with commodities embodied the clash of empires, ideas, and cultures, whether this was drinking a cup of coffee in London or wearing a calico dress in New England.

### Themes & Learning Goals

This seminar explores practices and ideas to illustrate the broad expansion of trade and the consequences of that trade for a range of people across empires. In so doing, it challenges us to identify the key pillars of the early modern world (empire, slavery, war, science) in making, moving, and consuming things. We will address questions of who buys, who builds, who sells, who moves, and who profits—not only who is able to do these things, but who is allowed to do so and who is forced to. How these seemingly simple questions have been answered in a range of historical contexts depended on categories of race, class, gender, and religion that have shaped how people have experienced commodities for centuries. Combining the material experience of how these things moved around with the cultural understanding of what they meant is a goal for this semester. A porcelain cup was rarely simply a cup.

Another goal is to gain an appreciation for this historical period from a global perspective. The course is designed for history majors as well as students who may only have a little experience with history. Students need not be familiar with the early modern period to enroll but will get more from the class if they are. By the end of the semester, students will be able to make connections between assigned readings and the broader themes of the course. We will work on how to ask analytical questions about the past and the ways historians have considered it. Class meetings will rely heavily on primary sources and the assigned secondary source readings to

interrogate social structures and historical events. Students will also be able to use historical context to evaluate social institutions, change over time, and power relationships within social, racial, gendered, and cultural contexts. Assignments and discussion will focus on building comfort with communicating arguments and marshaling evidence in writing and speech, while also providing opportunities for collaboration and creative pursuits.

## Requirements

Participation:	40%
Group Project:	60%
Proposal & Contract:	5%
Book Review:	10%
Primary Source Analysis:	10%
Annotated Bibliography:	5%
Unessay:	20%
Presentation:	5%
Reflection	5%

Active, informed participation is expected each week. Be sure to complete the readings before class, noting things you find interesting or about which you have questions. Your participation grade does not depend on mastery of the material, but on consistent and honest engagement with the readings and your peers. It is also important that together we create a respectful community where everyone feels comfortable thinking out loud, trading ideas, and venturing thoughts that may not be fully formed. Respect and courtesy are essential at all times. Outside of class, students are encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours in advance of class or assignments.

Seminars are successful to the extent that students can organize a sustained productive conversation that delves deeply into the reading. Students who find it challenging to articulate their best thoughts in class are welcome to use other means—emails to the class, for example—to compensate. Here is a rubric for assessing seminar participation:

*Outstanding:* Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and persuasively presented. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.

*Good:* Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class. Challenges are well substantiated and often persuasive. If this person were not present, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

*Adequate:* Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights but seldom offer a new direction for the discussion. Challenges are sometimes presented, fairly well substantiated, and are sometimes persuasive. If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.

*Non-Participant:* This person says little or nothing in class. Hence, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. If this person were not present, the quality of discussion would be unchanged.

*Unsatisfactory:* Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights and never a constructive direction for the class. Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent. If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved.

Participation also includes leading discussion. Students will be responsible for introducing the readings, guiding our discussion, and identifying major themes for a meeting during the semester. We will set the schedule and define the responsibilities once enrollments are finalized.

The course centers on a semester-long group project broken down into several assignments. Students will work with their group throughout the semester to investigate a commodity of their choosing this is not covered on the syllabus. Time in class each week will be set aside to plan and develop ideas, work on assignments, and consult with the professor (we will also have a mid-semester meeting to check progress). Some assignments are produced individually within the group and others are produced collaboratively within the group. For example, each student will write their own book review, primary source analysis, and reflection that connects with those of their group members. The proposal, annotated bibliography, “unessay,” and presentation will be produced collaboratively by the group.

We will begin early in the semester by forming groups and writing group contracts. Then, students will identify a commodity and write a brief proposal stating why that commodity was chosen, how it fits into the scope of the course, and what they seek to understand about it. The first assignments will be written individually, though should connect with others from the group. The book review will discuss a book/article from outside the syllabus about the chosen commodity and draw connections to the books written about by the other group members. For the primary source analysis, students will find a primary source related to their commodity to analyze in the context of course themes and the other sources in the group.

The major collaborative piece of this project is the “unessay”—a project that engages with historical material in an unconventional way. This is your opportunity to escape the confines of the typical essay. Be creative. Projects might include maps, data visualizations, podcasts, exhibits, or twitter threads; pamphlets, commercial letters, or advertisements; needlework, dyeing, painting, woodworking, or musical composition; or recreating a recipe or modeling something. These are only a few of the possible directions this project can take. Preparation for the “unessay” includes an annotated bibliography of sources to be used. These projects will be presented/performed to the class in the last week of the semester and will be followed by a short reflection piece. We will discuss the “unessay” at length in class, but a note here that it will not be graded on quality of artistry, but on the project’s success at communicating history creatively, analytically, and thoughtfully in a non-traditional format.

### Policies

Students must attend class each week unless they have a valid medical excuse and notify the instructor before class. Unexcused absences will lower your participation grade and multiple absences may result in a failing grade. Please bring the readings and your notes to class either printed or digitally. Laptops are permitted (and often encouraged for looking at primary sources) in class for this purpose, but all non-pertinent browsers and programs must be closed. Texting in class is not permitted.

All students are responsible for understanding and complying with Johns Hopkins's ethics standards. In this course, you are expected to be honest and truthful. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition. Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student affairs and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand. See the guide on "Academic Ethics for Undergraduates" and the Ethics Board Web site (<http://ethics.jhu.edu>) for more information.

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, [studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu).

### Readings

The following books are available at the bookstore, on reserve at the library, and some on e-reserve via Blackboard. Other readings will be posted electronically or distributed via email, and are marked with an asterisk (\*) on the schedule. I prefer hard copies of books, but several used in the course are available online. Please follow the links provided to find the assigned articles or find them via e-reserves.

Robert B. Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World*  
Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures*  
Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery* (**available online**)  
Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*  
Priya Satia, *Empire of Guns*  
Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*

### Schedule (subject to change)

#### Week 1. Introduction: Early Modern Globalization (Jan 30)

Marks, Robert B. *The Origins of the Modern World: A Global and Ecological Narrative*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002. [intro, ch. 1-4]  
Lewis, Simon L. and Maslin, Mark A. "Defining the Anthropocene." *Nature* 519 (March 12, 2015): 171-180. [[link](#)]  
Luciano, Dana. "The Inhuman Anthropocene." *Los Angeles Review of Books* blog (March 22, 2015). [[link](#)]

#### Week 2. Money/Silver (Feb 6)

Zimmer, Zac. "Bitcoin and Potosi Silver: Historical Perspectives on Cryptocurrency." *Technology and Culture* 58, no. 2 (2017): 307-334. [[link](#)]  
Smoak, Katherine. "The Weight of Necessity: Counterfeit Coins in the British Atlantic World, circa 1760-1800." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (2017): 467-502. [[link](#)]  
Peterson, Mark A. "Puritanism and Refinement in Early New England: Reflections on Communion Silver." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2001): 307-346. [[link](#)]

Wennerlind, Carl. "The Death Penalty as Monetary Policy: The Practice and Punishment of Monetary Crime, 1690-1830." *History of Political Economy* 36, no. 1 (2004): 131-161. [[link](#)]  
Hartigan-O'Connor, Ellen. *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. [ch. 4]\*

### Week 3. Chocolate & Tobacco (Feb 13)

Norton, Marcy. *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. [selections]  
Schwartzkopf, Stacey and Kathryn E. Sampeck, eds. *Substance and Seduction: Ingested Commodities in Early Modern Mesoamerica*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017. [ch. 3]\*  
McShane, Angela. "The New World of Tobacco." *History Today* 41 (April 2017): 41-47. [[link](#)]  
Delbourgo, James. "Sir Hans Sloane's Milk Chocolate and the Whole History of the Cacao." *Social Text* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 71-101. [[link](#)]

### Week 4. The Transatlantic Slave Trade (Feb 20)

Smallwood, Stephanie. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. [selections]  
Morgan, Jennifer L. *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. [ch. 5]\*  
Delbourgo, James. "Slavery in the Cabinet of Curiosities: Hans Sloane's Atlantic World." British Library publication. [[link](#)]  
Fuentes, Marisa J. *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. [ch. 4]\*  
Peruse the transatlantic slave trade database before class

### Week 5. Sugar (Feb 27)

Mintz, Sidney. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Viking, 1985. [selections]  
Roberts, Justin. "Working between the Lines: Labor and Agriculture on Two Barbadian Sugar Plantations." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (Jul. 2006): 551-586. [[link](#)]  
Mulcahy, Matthew and Stuart Schwartz. "Nature's Battalions: Insects as Agricultural Pests in the Early Modern Caribbean." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 3 (Jul. 2018): 433-464. [[link](#)]  
Newman, Brooke N. *A Dark Inheritance: Blood, Race, and Sex in Colonial Jamaica*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018. [ch. 2]\*

### Week 6. Coffee & Tea (Mar 6)

Cowan, Brian. "Publicity and Privacy in the History of the British Coffeehouse." *History Compass* 5, no. 4 (July 2007): 1180-1213. [[link](#)]  
Topik, Steven. "Coffee as a Social Drug." *Cultural Critique* 71 (Winter 2009): 81-106. [[link](#)]  
Van Gent, Jacqueline. "Linnaeus' Tea Cup: Masculinities, Affective Networks and Chinese Porcelain in 18th-Century Sweden." *Scandinavian Journal of History* 41, no. 3 (2016): 388-409. [[link](#)]  
Rappaport, Erika. *A Thirst for Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. [ch. 1]\*  
Breen, T. H. "Baubles of Britain': the American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century." *Past & Present* 119 (1998): 73-104. [[link](#)]

Norton, Mary Beth. "The Seventh Tea Ship." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (October 2016): 681-710. [\[link\]](#)

Hartigan-O'Connor, Ellen. *The Ties That Buy: Women and Commerce in Revolutionary America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009. [ch. 6]\*

#### Week 7. Alcohol (Mar 13)

Carp, Benjamin L. *Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. [ch. 2]\*

Hancock, David. "Commerce and Conversation in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic: The Invention of Madeira Wine." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29, no. 2 (Autumn 1998): 197-219. [\[link\]](#)

Harvey, Karen. "Ritual Encounters: Punch Parties and Masculinity in the Eighteenth Century." *Past & Present* 214, no. 1 (Feb. 2012): 165-203. [\[link\]](#)

Kimball, Marie. "Some Genial Old Drinking Customs." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (Oct. 1945): 349-358. [\[link\]](#)

#### **No class Week 8 (Mar 20) for Spring Recess**

#### Week 9. Medicine (Mar 27)

Schiebinger, Londa. *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004. [ch. 2]\*

Breen, Benjamin. "Drugs and Early Modernity." *History Compass* 15, no. 4 (April 2017). [\[link\]](#)

Monahan, Erika. "Locating Rhubarb: Early Modernity's Relevant Obscurity." In *Early Modern Things: Objects and Their Histories, 1500-1800*, ed. Paula Findlen (New York, 2013): 227-251.\*

Winterbottom, Anna. "Of the China Root: A Case Study of the Early Modern Circulation of *Materia Medica*." *Social History of Medicine* 28, no. 1 (2015): 22-44. [\[link\]](#)

Parsons, Christopher M. "The Natural History of Colonial Science: Joseph-Francois Lafitau's Discovery of Ginseng and Its Afterlives." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (Jan. 2016): 37-72. [\[link\]](#)

#### Week 10. Trees (Apr 3)

Anderson, Jennifer L. "Nature's Currency: The Atlantic Mahogany Trade and the Commodification of Nature in the Eighteenth Century." *Early American Studies* 2, no. 1 (2004): 47-80. [\[link\]](#)

Cronon, William. *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1983/2003. [ch. 2, 6]\*

Roberts, Strother E. "Pines, Profits, and Popular Politics: Responses to the White Pine Acts in the Connecticut River Valley." *The New England Quarterly* 83, no. 1 (Mar. 2010): 73-101. [\[link\]](#)

"A Mast-Fleet Letter of 1709." *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 78 (1966): 133-137. [\[link\]](#)

Pollitt, Ronald L. "Wooden Walls: English Seapower and the World's Forests." *Forest History Newsletter* 15, no. 1 (Apr. 1971): 6-15. [\[link\]](#)

#### Week 11. Iron (Apr 10)

Evans, Chris. "The Plantation Hoe: The Rise and Fall of an Atlantic Commodity." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2012): 71-100. [\[link\]](#)

Evans, Chris, Owen Jackson, and Goran Ryden. "Baltic Iron and the British Iron Industry in the Eighteenth Century." *The Economic History Review* 55, no. 4 (Nov. 2002): 642-665. [\[link\]](#)

Evans, Chris and Goran Ryden. "Voyage Iron?: An Atlantic Slave Trade Currency, Its European Origins, and West African Impact." *Past & Present* 239 (May 2018): 41-70. [\[link\]](#)

Plummers, Keith. "Atlantic Iron: Wood Scarcity and the Political Ecology of Early English Expansion." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (Jul. 2016): 389-426. [\[link\]](#)

#### Week 12. Guns (Apr 17)

Satia, Priya. *Empire of Guns: The Violent Making of the Industrial Revolution*. New York: Penguin Press, 2018. [ch. 2, 5, 7, First Interlude]

Cornell, Saul. *A Well-Regulated Militia: The Founding Fathers and the Origins of Gun Control in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. [ch. 1]\*

Cressy, David. "Saltpetre, State Security and Vexation in Early Modern England." *Past & Present* 212 (Aug. 2011): 73-111. [\[link\]](#)

Fagal, Andrew J. B. "The Mills of Liberty: Foreign Capital, Government Contracts, and the Establishment of DuPont, 1790-1820." *Enterprise & Society* 19, no. 2 (Jun. 2018): 309-351. [\[link\]](#)

#### Week 13. Cotton (Apr 24)

Beckert, Sven. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014. [ch. 1-3]

Christie, Ann. "A Taste for Seaweed: William Kilburn's Late Eighteenth-Century Designs for Printed Cottons." *Journal of Design History* 24, no. 4 (2011): 299-314. [\[link\]](#)

Eacott, Jonathan. *Selling Empire: India in the Making of Britain and America, 1600-1830*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016. [ch. 1]\*

Rockman, Seth. "Negro Cloth: Mastering the Market for Slave Clothing in Antebellum America." In *American Capitalism: New Histories*, ed. Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, 170-194. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.\*

Little, Ann M. "Shoot That Rogue, for He Hath an Englishman's Coat On!": Cultural Cross-Dressing on the New England Frontier, 1620-1760. *The New England Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (Jun. 2001): 238-273. [\[link\]](#)

#### Week 14. Conclusion (May 1)

Wrap-up & class presentations