HIST 491.01H H Ind Honors Readings (84178)
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor:	Dr. Cynthia Ross
Class Time:	TBD
Class Location:	SS 104
Office Location:	SS 104
Office Hours:	MWF 11:00am - noon; TR 11:00am – 1:00pm
Instructor Email:	cynthia.ross@etamu.edu

Email is the best way to reach me outside of class. I typically respond to email during regular business hours, within one day during the week; emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday may not get a response until Monday morning.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

This is an independent study course arranged for Preston Norris. Readings will be determined during the first meeting between the student and advisor.

Course Description

Student Learning Outcomes (Should be measurable; observable; use action verbs)
1. Student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics (issues, processes, trends, and systems) in relation to the history of trade.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Meeting Schedule

The student and advisor will meet once every other week for 60–90 minutes. Meetings will be used to:

- Review assigned readings and any additional materials discovered by the student.
- Discuss thematic and methodological issues related to the research topic.
- Refine the research question and thesis statement.
- Identify gaps in research and determine next steps.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, the student will:

1. Develop a clear, focused research question and tentative thesis statement related to trade node interconnectedness in the 15th century within a world history context.
2. Produce a draft research proposal that articulates the research question, significance, methodology, and preliminary argument.
3. Compile an annotated bibliography of at least 12 scholarly sources (minimum 8 monographs; up to 4 academic journal articles) including both primary and secondary sources.

Readings and Sources

The student will work from:

- Primary sources: Trade manifests, merchant correspondence, or other contemporary documents from the 15th century with the understanding that accessibility and translation may be issues.
- Secondary sources: Selected works on world history, trade networks, class formation, and relevant historiographical debates.
- Additional sources suggested by the advisor or discovered by the student, to be approved before use.

Readings will be selected collaboratively, with adjustments made as the research focus narrows. The student will be expected to complete readings before each meeting and prepare discussion notes.

Student Responsibilities

- Complete all assigned readings and bring written notes or questions to each meeting.
- Actively contribute to discussions by explaining interpretations, raising questions, and identifying links between sources.
- Submit short written progress reports (2–3 paragraphs) before each meeting summarizing the reading, insights gained, and next steps.
- Meet all deadlines for draft components of the thesis preparation work.

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Assignments

- **Week 4:** Preliminary topic outline and short rationale (1–2 pages)
- **Week 8:** Working thesis statement and preliminary bibliography (at least 6 scholarly sources)
- **Week 12:** Draft annotated bibliography (full 12 sources) and outline of research proposal
- **Week 14:** Final draft research proposal (5–6 pages) and complete annotated bibliography

Assessment

This independent study will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis, with a "Pass" requiring:

- Attendance at all scheduled meetings (unless excused in advance)
- Completion of all assigned readings and submission of required progress reports
- Delivery of all final materials (thesis statement, research proposal, annotated bibliography) by the agreed deadlines
- Demonstration of consistent engagement with both primary and secondary sources and ability to situate research within a world history framework

.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:
https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements

LMS Browser Support:
https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:
https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU loaner laptop, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Students are encouraged to email the professor with questions, concerns, or comments. Students must provide a valid return email address for replies. Unless otherwise announced, students can expect replies between 8:00am and 5:00pm during the week. Response times are not guaranteed over the weekend.
When sending an email always do the following:
1) Use a subject line. This tells me what the topic is and prevents your message from ending up in my junk mail.

2) Include your class and section (or class time). I need to know exactly which of my courses you are in. This course is Hist 491.01E.

3) Use clear, formal English in your emails. Before sending ask yourself, "Would I send this email to my boss?" If not, revise it for professionalism.

3) End the email with your first and last name, that is "sign" your message. I need to know who you are. If you go by a name that is different than the roster, please let me know.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

All writing assignments should be in standard format – Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins, double-spaced.

Standard paragraphs are 6 to 8 sentences; short paragraphs are 4 to 6 sentences.

Turabian style (Chicago style) with full author-title footnotes and bibliography page is required of all history majors.

Late Assignments:

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Any late work will be accepted at the discretion of the advisor and must include documentation.

Extra Credit:

None

Student Conduct:

All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See current Student Guidebook)

Academic Honesty:

In all courses, I expect that all work that you do and turn in is your own. It is the policy of the University, the History Department, and myself that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as deliberately taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is the selling of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards at all times.
It is fine to use other people's words and ideas as long as they receive credit in citations. If you are unsure about the precise definition of plagiarism and/or think you may have committed this form of academic dishonesty, see the instructor or visit the Online Writing Lab before you turn in the assignment.
If a student commits academic dishonesty on any part of an assignment, the assignment will receive a zero with no possibility for make-up. Additionally, any incidents of academic dishonesty may be reported to the Office of the Provost by the Professor according to university policy 13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty.

AI Use in Course

East Texas A&M University acknowledges there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.
Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

No AI use is allowed in this course. The student should not use any text generated by AI in any of their assignments. Use of AI to write any part of an assignment and present it as the student's work is unethical and academic dishonesty, thus prohibited. This applies to this course only (Hist 491.01E).

Students should be aware of the requirements in all their classes and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.
13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

Writing Lab:

The ETAMU Online Writing Lab is a valuable service free to any student. They can help you get started on a paper, help with drafts, and answer specific questions about citation style, grammar, and spelling. While they will not write the paper for you, they are there to give feedback and guidance.

Students with Disabilities Information:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Student Disability Resources & Services
East Texas A&M University
Waters Library, Room 162
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@etamu.edu

Nondiscrimination Notice:

ETAMU will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement:

Campus Concealed Carry - Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and ETAMU Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to
((http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedure s/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf) and/or consult your event organizer).

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Statement on Student Grievances:

Students who have questions or concerns about the Instructor's course policies or the conduct either of the Instructor or a classmate should first consult with the Instructor. In the event of a lack of resolution or satisfaction on the matter, the student may bring their concerns to the head of the History Department, Sharon Kowalsky (Sharon.Kowalsky@etamu.edu). If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion to the matter, students may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of Students per procedures outlined on pp. 15-19 of the Student Guide Book.

ETAMU Supports Students' Mental Health:

The Counseling Center at ETAMU, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.etamu.edu/counsel.

Syllabus Change Policy:

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events may make it necessary for the professor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced as soon as possible.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1 (Aug 25–29)

Meeting 1:

- Discussion of the student's broad research interest: trade node interconnectedness and class in the 15th century.
- Identify potential world history frameworks and historiographical approaches.
- Brainstorm relevant geographic regions, trade networks, and themes (class formation, economic exchange, cultural transfer).
- Determine initial reading list (advisor provides core secondary sources; student suggests possible additions).
  Task:
- Begin compiling potential primary and secondary sources for review.
- Read 1–2 short background pieces on world history methodology and the 15th century global context.

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Week 2 (Sept 1–5)

- Student reads first 2 secondary sources from the agreed list.
- Keep detailed reading notes (methodology, argument, sources, historiographical position).
- Draft a 1-page summary of each work to bring to the next meeting.

Week 3 (Sept 8–12)

Meeting 2:

- Discuss first two secondary sources.
- Review student's notes for depth and analytical engagement.
- Adjust reading list if needed.
  Task:
- Read 2 more secondary sources.
- Identify at least 2 potential primary sources (trade manifests, merchant accounts, port records, letters).

Week 4 (Sept 15–19)

- Continue reading.
- Write short progress report (2–3 paragraphs) on emerging research focus and themes.

Week 5 (Sept 22–26)

Meeting 3:

- Discuss secondary sources 3 and 4.
- Review potential primary sources for feasibility.
- Narrow topic focus (e.g., a specific region or set of trade routes, class dynamics in one empire, comparative framework).
  Task:
- Draft Preliminary Topic Outline (1–2 pages) with rationale.

Week 6 (Sept 29–Oct 3)

- Read 2 more secondary sources.
- Add notes to annotated bibliography in progress.

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Week 7 (Oct 6–10)

Meeting 4:

- Review preliminary topic outline.
- Discuss secondary sources 5 and 6.
- Identify major historiographical debates surrounding the topic.
  Task:
- Begin research question and think about a very tentative thesis statement (1–2 paragraphs).
- Expand annotated bibliography to 6–8 sources.

Week 8 (Oct 13–17)

- Read 1–2 more sources (books preferred; 1 journal article max this week).
- Write short reflection on how different historians interpret trade node interconnectedness and class differently.

Week 9 (Oct 20–24)

Meeting 5:

- Review research question and tentative thesis statement; review progress on annotated bibliography.
- Discuss historiographical schools of thought relevant to the topic (e.g., Marxist, world-systems, cultural history).
  Task:
- Continue reading and annotating to reach 12 scholarly sources (no more than 2 journal articles).

Week 10 (Oct 27–Oct 31)

- Write draft Research Proposal Outline (1–2 pages) including:
  - Tentative thesis statement
  - Key research questions
  - Methodological approach
  - Preliminary source base

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

Week 11 (Nov 3–7)

Meeting 6:

- Review research proposal outline.
- Refine tentative thesis statement for clarity and precision.
  Task:
- Begin full draft of research proposal (5–6 pages).

Week 12 (Nov 10–14)

- Continue drafting research proposal.
- Ensure annotated bibliography is complete (minimum 12 sources).

Week 13 (Nov 17–21)

Meeting 7:

- Review near-final research proposal and annotated bibliography.
- Discuss any final adjustments to argument and structure.
  Task:
- Revise and finalize proposal and bibliography.

Week 14 (Nov 24–28) — *Thanksgiving Week*

- Light workload: finalize minor edits, proofread proposal.

Week 15 (Dec 1–5) — Final Submission Week

Due at Meeting:

- Final Research Proposal (5–6 pages)
- Final Thesis Statement (1 paragraph) Note: Thesis can/will change until thesis is complete.
- Final Annotated Bibliography (12 sources, with annotations)

The *syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*