Water during the seventeenth and eighteenth century was a uniter not a divider. From this perspective, residents of Charleston, South Carolina were much closer to their brethren in Barbados than in Virginia and closer to trading partners in London than in Boston. However, studies of early modern English and American history and literature are typically constrained by modern political borders that did not exist prior to the nineteenth century. This course focuses on the Anglophone World as it really was, an English speaking discourse that spanned the Atlantic. Many of the readings are seminal texts in American and English cultural studies. We will read these texts as they were read at the time, as part of a larger conversation about what it meant to be English and what it meant to live on the peripheries of a burgeoning Empire. We will read Robinson Crusoe and The Tempest as American texts and the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin as part of a broader “British” discourse.

The syllabus is structured thematically in order to bring together many different disciplines of historical analysis such as economics, international law, cartography, labor (free and enslaved), gender studies, biology, Native American studies, literary studies, and material culture. We will follow these themes chronologically from the beginning of European expansion across the Atlantic to the Age of Revolutions. By studying a transatlantic discourse, we will explore a number of themes including the movement of organisms (people and microbes) and commodities across oceans, captivity and cultural contact, labor (free and enslaved), and piracy. Taken together, these themes will illuminate the gradual formation of increasingly distinct American and British identities.

Course assignments focus on the utilization of primary sources and in class oral presentation. Students will present their work on maps, poems, prints, and other primary sources that are easily available online. Newspapers are especially important for this class because of the immense influence they had in uniting the Anglophone World while simultaneously fostering a separate American and British identity. Benjamin Franklin, for example, used the press as a venue for expressing his English identity in the mid-eighteenth century only to use that same press to model his unique “Americaness” during and after the Revolution.
Course Requirements:
- There will be one seminar per week with attendance mandatory and participation graded. There will be a number of small in class presentations on assigned material. (40% of total)
- There will be one three to five page paper based on Early American Newspapers Online (20% of total)
- There will be one twelve to fifteen page paper due at the end of the semester on a topic of your choice. (40% of total)

Required Texts

David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds., The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800 (2002)
Susanna Rowson, Slaves in Algiers (A Copley Edition)
Schedule of Classes: [Subject to Change]

*Note: Supplemental readings are for graduate students taking 278 only.

Tuesday, March 29
What is the Atlantic World?
Reading: Armitage, British Atlantic, pp. xiv-27; pp. 93-153
*Supplemental Reading: Jack Greene and Philip Morgan: Atlantic History

Tuesday, April 5
Human and Non-human Movement
Reading: Bernard Bailyn, The Peopling of British North America; Selected works by Alfred Crosby and others on the Columbian Exchange.
Armitage, British Atlantic, pp. 31-50.
*Supplemental Reading: Elizabeth Fenn: Pox Americana

Tuesday, April 12
Exploration: Fears and Anxieties
Reading: William Shakespeare: The Tempest; Michel de Montaigne, On Cannibals.
John White's illustrations of Virginia Native Americans
*Supplemental Reading: Everything else in the Norton Critical Edition

Tuesday, April 19
Cartography: Conceptualizing the New World
*Supplemental Reading: Martin Bruckner: The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, & National Identity

ASSIGNMENT: Bring in a copy of a map from the John Carter Brown Library database with a one page response paper on the map

Tuesday, April 26
Human and Non-human Commodities
Reading: Armitage, British Atlantic, 51-68; pp.154-172; T.H. Breen, “Baubles of Britain”
*Supplemental Reading: Stephanie Smallwood, Saltwater Slavery

ASSIGNMENT: Each student is in charge of one commodity (sugar, bullion, rice, etc.) and must be able to show on a world map the movement of that commodity through global markets.

Tuesday, May 3
Pirates and Maritime Labor
Reading: Marcus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and
the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic (2000)
Supplemental Reading: Early English Books Online: A. O. Esquemelin, The Buccaneers of America (selections); Captain Charles Johnson, The History of the Pyrates (selections);
**ASSIGNMENT:** Follow a pirate in colonial newspapers

Tuesday, May 10
The Rise of the Novel
Reading: Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*
Supplemental: Everything else in the Norton Critical Edition

Tuesday, May 17
Benjamin Franklin’s Atlantic World
Readings: Benjamin Franklin: *The Autobiography*
Armitage, British Atlantic, pp. 175-213
*Supplemental Reading: [Each student chooses one of the following]*
David Waldstreicher, *Runaway America*
Gordon Wood: *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*
Joyce Chaplin: *The First Scientific American*
Edmund Morgan: *Benjamin Franklin*
Benjamin Franklin: *Poor Richard’s Almanack*
ASSIGNMENT: Newspaper search to be determined in class.

Tuesday, May 24
Slavery in an Expanding Global Marketplace
Reading: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and other Writings*
Thomas Hogarth, *Industry and Idleness*
Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, from *The Spectator*, number 11, March 13, 1711 [Inkle and Yarico]
*Supplemental Readings: Everything else in the Norton Critical Edition

Tuesday, May 31
American Slavery / American Freedom
Reading: Susanna Rowson, *Slaves in Algiers*
[We will read this in class just remember to bring your copy]
Armitage, *British Atlantic*, pp. 214-249
Benjamin Franklin’s Letter to the editor
William Cowper’s *The Negro’s Complaint*

*Supplemental Readings: [Each student chooses one of the following]*
Linda Colley, *Captives*
Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary*
Daniel Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery, and Redemption*
Robert Allison, *The Crescent Obscured*
Frank Lambert, *The Barbary Wars*
Lisa Voigt, *Writing Captivity in the Early Modern Atlantic*

ASSIGNMENT: Search Newspapers for Slaves in Algiers

Final Papers Due
Twelve to twenty-five page paper
[Length depends on whether student wants this to serve as a writing sample for graduate school, etc.]
Friday, June 3