Rivers, Seas and Oceans:
European waterborne trade and its networks, c. 1400-1700
HIST 509: 481: 01, Rutgers University – Camden, spring 2013,
Mon. 6:00-8:40, Armitage 220

Sara Brooks
429 Cooper Street, rm. 205, (856) 225-2712, sebrooks@rutgers.edu
Office hours: Monday 4:00-5:45. I am also available in general between around 12 noon and 1:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and by appointment.

Introduction to the course
Speed and economy. These might seem like modern values, but they have always been important to merchants and traders. Before the development of the railroad, there was no faster, cheaper way to transport goods than on water. This senior seminar will look at an era of drastic transformation in the trading fortunes of Europe. The course begins by looking at regional trading networks and the ways in which they shaped expectations for trade among Europeans. A remarkable range of European waters played a part in these networks. Rivers helped to define regions and gave bulk transport a physical pathway. Seas had perhaps the greatest range of goods carried on their waters, often during these years in more and more specialized vessels. The expansion of Europeans’ ventures beyond the continent’s seas and into the world’s oceans brings into question how technologies, markets, and culture in Europe changed in the face of these familiar experiences made new by distance. These big topics have ample scale for research development. Many of them are at the cutting edge of current scholarship. Together we’ll work to develop a map of these networks that is cultural, not just geographical. Individually, you will build on our joint efforts to understand these networks in order to produce an individual research paper pertinent to our theme.

As advanced undergraduate work we will not take the books we read at simple face value. For most historians waterborne trade is both familiar and at the same time obscure. From the most basic level teaching of pre-modern history treats the advantages of carrying goods by water rather than over land as a given and tends to rather generally and lazily attribute to significant causal power without much investigation. We will work to disaggregate some of these classroom commonplaces, looking at the specific aspects of waterborne trade: its localities, its relation to the development of European banking and credit, its dependence on technologies, and its ultimate creation: the first understandings of a global world.

There is no way we can treat such matters comprehensively in a single course, but our approach offers the flexibility to try out developing and researching a historical question while also working to understand historiographic debate. The structure of the course is discursive and you must come ready to participate every week. We have a challenging three-hour meeting every Monday evening. You will be regularly writing outside of class in order to support our in-class work.
This senior seminar is intended to provide two tracks to completing your degree requirement. Those of you who wish to engage in a research project culminating in a paper may do so. There will be extensive support available for those pursuing this option. Those who are not interested in producing a research project will complete two substantive projects over the semester supported by smaller regular pieces. We will discuss in class how and by when you must decide which of the two routes you will take.

The Two Tracks

Track One
Following this track you will concentrate on developing your skills in reading histories and understanding historiographic approaches to a historical field. You will begin the course by writing a significant paper comparing approaches in the

Comparative paper (7-8pp.), see below for deadlines: 25%
Mapping project, done weekly. due by agreement: 15%
  (textual support and design: 10%)
  (In-class presentation: 5%)
Primary source collection, due 4/29: 10%
Final historiography paper (9-10pp.), due day of final exam: 30%
  (submission of draft: 10%)
  (submission of final: 20%)
Participation and meetings: 20%
  Between – class responses (weekly from week 5): 15%

Track Two
In this route you will produce an original research paper. You will develop a research question and plan. We will meet to discuss your progress. This class will assume the character of tutorials, so attendance at meetings with me is required. In exchange, how you will be assessed differs from those on track one. The breakdown is as follows:

Comparative paper (7-8pp.), see below for deadlines: 25%
Research project: 70%
  (development of research question, due 2/18: 5%)
  (development of bibliography and discussion, due 3/4: 5%)
  (halfway review of research, due 3/25: 5%)
  (draft submission(s), due starting 4/15: 10%)
  (final paper (20-25pp.), due day of final exam: 40%)
Participation and meetings: 5%

Expectations for seminar
This is a seminar rather than a lecture class. It is led by you with support from me. Depending on what track you choose through the class, your responsibilities will vary. If you choose track one, your prepared attendance is essential. You must notify me of any potential absence before the class in question. Further, this is not a
class where you can get credit by silent attendance. You must speak, and exchange
between you and your fellow students is expected. Your between-class responses
are intended to help you reflect and consolidate on our in class work and help you
prepare to be articulate about the new week’s work. Further, each of you on track
one will complete a mapping project which will you will present to the class, helping
us all to visualize the week's work.

If you opt for track two, your primary responsibility will rest in consistent
attendance in class and timely meetings with me to discuss the progress of your
work. You should be able to apply the progress you are making with your project to
class discussion, but will not be obliged to produce documents from the supporting
reading.

Please keep in mind that academic integrity is what you expect of me as well as what
I expect of you. Your senior seminar is an opportunity for you to crown your
experience at Camden. I hope you regard one of the two options with enthusiasm
and make the most of the class. The expectations entailed regarding your work
include that you are the author of your work intellectually as well as in the simple
sense of its creation. Please review the campus’ policy:
http://fas.camden.rutgers.edu/student-experience/academic-integrity-policy/.

Book purchases
We will discuss this at our first session. I suspect you will want to obtain two books:
Elliott’s *Empires of the Atlantic World* and Cook’s *Matters of Exchange*. Early
semester material, including all sources for the comparison paper will be available
electronically.

Schedule and assignments
Note that some elements here are subject to change.

January 28
Introduction: trade and the idea of waterborne networks
In class read: Dollinger, *The German Hansa*, pp. 212-23

February 4
Trading cities I: goods and a region
Nicholas, *The Northern Lands*, chs. 10-11 and conclusion
For the comparison paper:
Peter Johanek, “Imperial Free Towns of the Holy Roman Empire” pp. 295-319
Abulafia, *The Great Sea*, introduction, pt. 4, chs. 1-3

February 11
Trading cities II: trading interests
Dollinger, *The German Hansa*, chs. 5-6, 9, 11
For the comparison paper:
OR
Lloyd, England and the German Hanse, 1157-1611, chs. 3-4

February 18
Trading cities III: what is a port city?
Konwitz, The Urban Millennium, pp. 60-7
Brand and Müller, The Dynamics of Economic Culture in the North Sea- and Baltic Region, chs. 4-5, 8.
  For the comparison paper:
  Scott, The City-State in Europe, 1000-1600, Hinterland, Territory, Region, ch. 6
  and conclusion
  Limberger, “‘No town in the world provides more advantages’: economies of agglomeration and the golden age of Antwerp,” pp. 39-62

February 25 - comparison paper draft due from all students
Mediterranean networks I: The ‘commercial revolution’ and afterwards
De Roover, The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, ch. 6
Hunt and Murray, A History of Business in Medieval Europe, 1200-1550, pp. 195-226

March 4 – comparison paper final due from all students
Mediterranean networks II: Trading states and elites
Kirk, Genoa and the Sea, chs. 1-4

March 11
Ships and sponsors
Gay and Ciano, The Ships of Christopher Columbus, pp. 13-34, 59-95

Spring break

March 25
Seas and Oceans
Tabak, The Waning of the Mediterranean, 1550-1870, ch. 3

April 1
Oceanic Globe I
Elliott, The Empires of the Atlantic World, chs. 1-4

April 8
Oceanic Globe II
Elliott, The Empires of the Atlantic World, chs. 5-8

April 15
Oceanic Globe III
Cook, Matters of Exchange, chs. 1-4

April 22
April 29
Oceanic Globe V
Cook, *Matters of Exchange*, chs. 8-11

May 6
I have to be away on this day. You will instead schedule a meeting with me to discuss your work toward your final projects, which will be due the day of our exam. This will be a chance to discuss drafts with me.

Deadline for final papers on both tracks will be on our scheduled exam day, which I believe to be Monday, May 13 at 6:00pm.