

**Global Transition and Change: Commodity Culture (HIST 102)**  
**Twelve Objects that Changed the World**  
**(& one that changed Wisconsin)**  
**University of Wisconsin La Crosse, Fall 2012**

Instructor: Dr. Ariel Beaujot  
Location: Sec 15 2 CENT2302; Sec 16 8CENT 2302  
Day/Time: MWF Sec. 15 8:50AM-9:45AM; Sec. 16 11:00AM-11:55AM

**KEEPING IN TOUCH:**

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In person: MWF 2pm-3pm or by appointment (office no. 403A, Carl Wimberly Hall)  
By phone: 608-785-6798  
By email: [abeaujot@uwla.edu](mailto:abeaujot@uwla.edu)

**1. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

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This world history class focusses on how such commodities as salt, tea, silk and cotton, reveal the world-wide systems of exchange from 1492 to the present. The course will look at how objects were involved in politics, diplomacy, war, rebellion, and colonialism, as well as more personal concerns surrounding community, gender, and everyday life. By looking at the history of commodities you will have the opportunity to think about each object's importance in today's society and how they affect your choices as consumers, American citizens, and actors on the world stage. My hope is that in reviewing the historical background of the commodities we use in our everyday lives the class will come to an understanding of the long term entrenchment of inequality in world trading systems and begin to think about possible solutions. As we work through the course the following thematic strands will be explored:

- capitalism, labour, and the free market
- imperialism, neocolonialism, world markets, and the supply chain
- technology, industrialization, and modern replacements
- economics, politics, and taxation
- consumption and luxury
- migration, population, family, and gender
- disease, plague, addiction, and war
- agriculture, environment, and sustainability

**GENERAL EDUCATION:**

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This course satisfies a requirement of the UW-La Crosse General Education program, and conforms to the basic curricular goals of the program and specific student learning outcomes as approved by the UW-L Faculty Senate (2005). At its most basic level, the General Education Program at UW-L is the foundation upon which students build lives of independent and life-long learning. More specifically, the program provides the structure for a liberal education: a knowledge base for civic literacy in science, the arts, literature, health and social sciences and world history.

## READINGS AND VIEWINGS:

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Required readings of chapters and articles can be downloaded from the course website. Documentaries can be watched anywhere you can get an internet connection (links included in the course schedule section below). There is a Computer Laboratory on the main floor of the Murphy Library where you can view the films if you don't have access to a web-connection at home.

Recommended text book: Peter von Sivers, Charles A. Desnoyers, George B. Stow, *Patterns of World History, Combined Volume* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). On Mondays each week I will provide additional recommended readings from the textbook that will help provide context to the week's lectures.

## CLASS FORMAT:

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**Monday (M): What does this commodity mean to us today?** In this class we will listen to short lectures, watch videos, discuss the politics of modern consumption, and develop mini-assignments that the class will complete throughout the week. This class will also include 'skills workshops' that will help develop your abilities in planning and time management, note taking (in lecture, on textbook), primary source analysis, library searches, essay planning, and writing and study skills. I will also provide recommended textbook readings.

**Wednesday (W): Historical Background: How did we get to this point?** This class is an interactive lecture that discusses the history and world significance of a commodity. The content of the lectures will provide information necessary for doing your case studies, assignments, mid-term, and exams.

**Friday (F): Case Study**—This class begins with a 5-10 question multiple-choice quiz based on the readings for discussion (available on the course website and listed in the course schedule below). We will review the short assignment that students did throughout the week, and have prolonged discussions about the week's readings.

## 2. ASSIGNMENTS:

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**Friday Quizzes:** Each Friday we will have a quiz of between 5-10 multiple-choice questions on the article(s) read and documentaries viewed before class. There are no make-up quizzes. I will not count two quizzes for each student in case of absence for any reason. I will count only the top 10 grades for those who write all the quizzes. **DUE EACH FRIDAY**

**Midterm:** will take place in class and consist of an essay question and three 'identify the significance' questions. **DUE OCT. 11**

**Final Essay:** This assignment is an eight-page essay about a commodity of historical and world significance. You will use the sources found for your annotated bibliography and incorporate the information you discovered in the primary source analysis for the essay. Your essay will include a clear argument, be historically based, and discuss at least three separate countries. **DUE NOV. 27**

List of suggested commodities for essay: tulip, fur, wheat, cod, gun powder, hemp/marijuana, plastic, diamonds, indigo, horses, corn, chocolate, apples, silver, wine, ivory, opium, rice, slaves, whales, coal, porcelain, wheat, timber (wood), coal, cattle, sheep, camel, banana.

- **Annotated Bibliography:** The purpose of this assignment is for you to find primary and secondary sources for your essay topic using the extended University of Wisconsin library system. Each bibliographical entry that you find will be assessed in a paragraph that: 1) describes the content of the source; 2) mentions why the source is useful; 3) indicates any strengths or weaknesses of the source; 4) evaluates the overall reliability of the source; and, 5) describes your reaction to the source. **DUE OCT.23**
- **Primary Source Analysis:** For this assignment you will choose a primary source (written document, photograph, cartoon, poster, motion picture, sound recording) found for your annotated bibliography assignment. You will assess the source using a document analysis worksheet (<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/>) and write a one-page response analyzing how the content is shaped by the context in which it was created. **DUE NOV. 6**

**Culmination of the mini-assignments:** Each week students will be asked to do a mini-assignment about the commodity that we are studying. These will be the focus for discussion for Friday classes. All of the mini-assignments will culminate in a final project. I encourage you to present this assignment creatively as a blog, website, scrapbook, video or any other form of your choice. **DUE DEC. 6**

**Exam:** will consist of two essay questions and five ‘identify the significance’ questions. The final exam will incorporate information from the entire semester. **DUE TBA DEC 14-15**

**Visual Timeline of Due Dates:**

September	October	November	December	Worth:
	11 Midterm			10%
	23 Annotated Bib			15%
		6 Primary Source		10%
		27 Final Essay		20%
			6 Mini Assign	20%
			TBA Final Exam	15%

**Grading breakdown:**

Quizes	10%	Essay	20%
Annotated Bib	15%	Mini-assignments	20%
Primary Source	10%	Exam	15%
Midterm	10%	TOTAL:	100%

**Grade Assessment:**

A 92-100% (excellent)	A/B 89-91%
B 82-88% (great)	B/C 79-81%
C 70-78% (satisfactory)	D 60-68% (needs improvement)
F below 59% (fail)	

**Late assignments:** The penalty for late assignments is 5% per day (not including weekends). Once the assignments have been returned to class, any outstanding assignments will receive a mark of 0%. If you need an extension on your assignment request this at least 3 days before it is due otherwise penalties will apply.

### 3. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

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1. Attend all classes. Attendance is expected and will be recorded each class.
2. Come to class prepared, having read the material. Bring the reading assigned for that day.
3. Take notes on lectures and during group and individual work.
4. Participate fully in discussions. Be inclusive and respectful of your fellow students' opinions. Be aware of language that is confrontational or might offend your fellow classmates and your professor.
5. If you arrive late or are absent, find out what you missed from another student in the class. You are responsible for all material and announcements given in class whether you are in attendance or not.
6. Plagiarism is an academic offence. Plagiarism is when you copy or do not properly reference journal articles and books, other student's work, and websites. A more extensive definition and information on how to avoid plagiarism are available online:  
<http://libguides.uwlax.edu/content.php?pid=250427&sid=2067764>. If you would like one-on-one support to appropriately cite work please make an appointment with the writing center (<http://www.uwlax.edu/writingcenter/>).
7. Hand in assignments in hard copy during class the day they are due. Electronic assignments will not be accepted.
8. It is appreciated if texting, emailing, and changing your Facebook status occurs outside of the classroom.
9. Seek out the support you need to maximize your learning and success in the course. Don't hesitate to use the following resources:
  - My office hours (MWF 2pm-3pm office no. 403A, Carl Wimberly Hall)
  - Writing help at the writing center (<http://www.uwlax.edu/writingcenter/>).
  - Research help with a librarian (<http://www.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary/forms/consult.htm>)
  - Studying, note taking, and reviewing help with a history tutor (details TBA).

## **COURSE SCHEDULE (EDITED VERSION):**

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### **Week One—COFFEE**

MINI ASSIGNMENT: Keep track of how many cups of coffee you drank this week. Keep one portion of each of the take-away cups (note time and date that you drank on each cup). If you are drinking cups at home or using a reusable cup, make a note of each time you drink your coffee on a scrap of paper. Bring your coffee cup scraps and your notes to class in an envelope on Friday.

W: Sept 5 Introduction: Twelve Objects that Changed the World

- skills workshop: planning and time management

F: Sept 7 “Sleep is a symptom of caffeine deprivation:” Coffee now and then

### **Week Two—TEA**

MINI ASSIGNMENT: Take lecture notes about the history of tea. Discuss as a group how to take notes, what was most important, what could be improved.

M: Sept 10 The Tea Party and Iced Tea: The modern American experience of an ancient commodity

- skills workshop: take lecture notes (MINI ASSIGNMENT)

W: Sept 12 “Tea for two:” China and European Colonialism

F: Sept 14 READINGS FOR DISCUSSION:

- Fromer, Julie E. “A Typically English Brew: Victorian Histories of Tea and Representations of English National Identity.” Chap 7 in *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008.
- Hanway, Jonas. “The Pernicious Effects of Tea.” Chap. V in *An Essay on Tea, A Journal of Eight Days Journey*, Volume 2. London: H. Woodfall and C. Henderson, 1757.

NOTE: Read pp. 35-42