

History 4318G
Clashing Empires in North America to 1800
Winter 2025

Instructor: **Prof. Nancy Rhoden, Associate Professor**

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Office Hours: **Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or by appointment**

This is a **draft** outline. Please see the course site on OWL Brightspace for a final version.

Course Description:

Early North American empires (1500-1800), both settler and Indigenous, clashed militarily, socially, and culturally. This comparative course explores various settler societies: New France, New Spain, New England, New Netherlands, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina, and their interactions with each other and local Indigenous Nations, to highlight cultural similarities and differences.

Invitation to the Course:

Explore the history of early North America in this course that upends traditional narratives of settler progress toward nationhood. Expand your understanding of the variety of Indigenous peoples and cultures from 1600-1800. Consider how Indigenous peoples both resisted and accommodated European settlers, and how European settlement impacted Indigenous societies (e.g. Huron, Haudenosaunee, Narragansetts, Powhatan, Catawba, Delaware, Shoshone, Ute) in regions that the European settlers called New France, the Great Lakes Region, New England, the Chesapeake, New Spain, and the Western Great Basin. Become better acquainted with the variety of experiments of rival European empires (e.g. Spanish, French, Dutch, and English). Consider how English colonies differed tremendously from one another. Immerse yourself in a world where imported European cultures and Indigenous cultures clashed. Understand multiple points of view. Reconsider previous assumptions.

This course provides flexibility in the selection of assignments and encourages students to study topics that particularly interest them. Follow up on something exciting from discussion or readings and craft your own research question and topic. Support will be provided to refine your research topic and objectives.

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Previous background in the history of early North America is not needed to be successful in this course. If you are considering taking this course and have any questions, please do not hesitate to email the professor.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 History course at the 2200 level or above. Contact the History Undergraduate Coordinator to request permission to enroll without the prerequisite.

Course Syllabus

Learning Outcomes for Students:

- to improve understanding of the variety of settler empires and Indigenous societies in North America to 1800, and to compare/contrast many of their cultural similarities and differences
- to examine several well-known moments of conflict and other interactions between and among settlers and between settlers and Indigenous peoples in North America to 1800
- to improve oral and written communication skills
- to improve research skills (selecting a topic, research question development, primary source analysis, secondary source evaluation, and building a persuasive evidence-based argument).

Students should come to class, having read the weekly reading assignment, prepared to participate fully in discussions. Regular attendance and thoughtful conversation on the weekly topic/readings are necessary for participation grades. This course has several small assignments, and so students should read the syllabus carefully and be familiar with all due dates. Students have some choice, as outlined below, in what assignments they choose to submit. With such flexibility comes responsibility. Plan carefully so that you can make selections based on what interests you the most. It is not always advisable to select the last possible option. It is expected that everyone should consult with the professor about their research paper more than once. Feel free to ask lots of questions.

Course Requirements: Regular, informed class participation weekly (and attendance at more than half the classes) + Two (2) Book Reviews + Short Written Assignment + Final Research Paper (includes brief proposal, brief report on progress, and paper submission). See “Methods of Evaluation” below for more detail on these course requirements.

Methods of Evaluation:

The following is a description of the methods of evaluation and their weight. Please read carefully the course policy reminders that follow.

Class Participation requires regular, frequent, and informed participation weekly. Students must attend more than half of the classes (i.e. at least 7 classes out of 12) to pass the course,

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regardless of grades received for other assignments. Students should read the assigned weekly readings before class each week, and prepare statements on the author's main arguments, and consider their opinions on the readings so they can contribute their perspectives in class. The lowest two weeks of participation scores will not be included in the final grade. That means the participation grade is based on the top 10 out of 12 weekly scores. A maximum of 5 points for attendance will be assigned; a maximum of 10 points based on oral contributions will be assigned. Weight: 15%

TWO (2) Book Reviews are due at the beginning of the class in which they will be discussed and cannot be submitted late. They should be 4-5 pages in length. See Brightspace site for tips on book reviews. Note that book reviews should make some reference to relevant course readings when possible. Two book reviews are required, but if you choose to write a third book review, the top two grades will be used. Choose 2 from the following 4 books that will be read in this class: Greer, Brooks, Blackhawk, and Richter. If the work is not completed by the due date, students may elect to complete a later book review. This flexible assignment format will apply in lieu of academic consideration. Weight: 30% (2 reviews, 15% each).

Short Written Assignment is due at the beginning of class on week 7. Length: 5-6 pages. Note that there will be a mini lecture in class on New England and Chesapeake societies which will provide some necessary background for Option A, and your reading of Richter (chapters 7, 8) will be particularly helpful. You need to make explicit reference (and include footnotes) to material from the mini-lecture AND material from required readings. Write an answer to either (A) or (B). Note that both (A) and (B) have interior choices. This is intended as a creative (and hopefully fun) task to demonstrate your understanding of the different perspectives and worldviews of people living then, as well as their likely challenges and imagined experiences. While it may look like a creative writing exercise, and certainly bears some resemblance to one, it will be graded mainly for its historical content and historical understanding. Think of this assignment as requiring you to write an admittedly "faux" primary source and then use the tools of the historian and editor to cite it properly. Weight: 15%

- (A) Hezekiah Lovegod, a pious (but fictitious) New Englander, was sailing to see fellow Puritan family members in the British West Indies when he was accidentally shipwrecked off the coast of Virginia in the 1640s. What would he think of the place and its various people, and how would he evaluate the society there and its customs? Meanwhile, Jack Buckaneer, an infamous (but also fictitious) pirate, was sailing to Britain when his ship broke its main mast off Cape Cod and the passengers and ship had to winter in Plymouth, Massachusetts for repairs. What would he think of Massachusetts' society in the 1640s? Write a letter (as if you were either Lovegod or Buckaneer) to a family member at home or in England explaining your experiences and your thoughts as a visitor. (Note: you must include footnotes to material, including course readings, mini lectures, or other scholarly sources that you have used to learn about either place in this period.)
- (B) Research an Indigenous person of your choice who lived in 17th or 18th century North America (not Pocahontas since we will have already talked about her) and who was taken to Europe (i.e. kidnapped or voluntarily). Research their experiences and then write

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down what they might have told their family about European cities and villages, people, society, and culture, if they were able to return to North America. Write down the transcript of that imagined oral testimony (translated into modern English of course). I will offer resources and tips to find possible subjects, if you reach out to me. Although this is (partially) a creative writing assignment, footnotes must be included to cite any secondary or primary sources you used to learn about your real-life subject.

Research Proposal is a 2 to 3 page statement describing your intended research problem, draft research questions, available primary resources, and any challenges you are facing as you work on this research topic. It should be submitted with a 1-2 page bibliography of the sources you have examined or intend to examine. This is intended to be an assignment that will assist with the development of your research paper and allow for feedback and suggestions at a particularly useful time while the paper is still in development. It is due in class in Week 6. Weight: 5%

Oral Presentation on Research-In-Progress will be scheduled in either week 8, 9, 10, or 11. Come to class on February 5, 2025 (having already checked out deadlines in your other courses) ready to volunteer for specific dates based on your first choice, second choice, or third choice. The goal of the oral presentation on research-in-progress is to present your research questions, tentative research findings (at that point), and your plan of work. This is a presentation on work in progress and so it is not expected that you would have finalized your research findings. The length of the oral presentation will depend on the number of students in the class, and yet it is not expected to exceed 15 minutes plus up to 10 minutes for questions/answers. (This length may need to be adjusted, or made shorter, depending on the class enrollment.) If you are not presenting that day, you are expected to ask questions and provide constructive feedback to your peers that will help them and will contribute to your participation grade. Weight: 10%

Final Research Paper is due at the beginning of the last class (Wednesday April 2, 2025) and should be 10-15 pages (not including bibliography). It should be based on your research proposal and oral presentation on your research-in-progress. Students are urged to explore a topic that holds special interest for them, either to dig deeper into an issue we considered briefly or to explore a problem we did not study. Subjects should be drawn from North American to 1800 and related to course topics. The professor must approve the topic in the research proposal. Consultation with the professor as you research your topic is strongly encouraged, even multiple times. A bibliography (Chicago Manual of Style) and either footnotes or endnotes are required. You need to create research notes as part of your research and writing process and submit a copy of these research notes with your final research paper. (Do not worry if they are “rough” and do not spend time making them neat.) If you used ChatGPT, your research notes should include prompts and answers from working with AI, to show how you are using AI ethically, responsibly, and creatively. Note that drafts can be submitted for the professor’s feedback and suggestions, but only if received at least 14 days before the final due date, to allow time for drafts to be read and for you to have enough time to respond to any suggestions. Weight: 25%

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Summary of Required Assignments, Weights & DEADLINES:

Participation (weekly, regular): 15%

Two (2) Book Reviews: 30% (15% each). Due at beginning of class on the day the books are scheduled to be discussed. **Select 2 of the following 4 titles: (1) Greer: due January 22, 2025; (2) Brooks: due February 5, 2025; (3) Blackhawk: due March 5, 2025; and (4) Richter: due March 12, 2025.**

Research Proposal: 5%. Due at beginning of class on Week 6 on **February 12, 2025.**

Short Written Assignment: 15%. Due at beginning of class in Week 7 on **February 26, 2025.**

Oral Presentation on Research-in-Progress: 10% To Be Scheduled with Students for Week 8, Week 9, Week 10, or (if necessary) Week 11—i.e. on **March 5, March 12, March 19** (and if necessary) on March 26.

Final Research Paper (with bibliography, footnotes or endnotes, and research notes): 25%. Due at the beginning of the last class on Wednesday, **April 2, 2025.**

Important Reminders about Course Policies:

This course is designated an Essay Course (E/F/G) and as such the student must demonstrate competence in essay writing to receive course credit. **Consequently, students must submit and pass (before late penalty) all 4 major written course assignments to pass the course** (i.e. two book reviews, short written assignment, and final research paper).

Late book reviews will not be accepted under normal circumstances.
(Students may choose to submit a different book review later in the course.)

Late penalty (5% for first day late, 2% for subsequent days late including weekends) will apply for final research papers, research proposals, and/or short written assignments not submitted by the deadline, unless there is a recommendation from academic counselling for accommodation. No papers can be accepted after the last day of classes (April 4, 2025), unless there is a recommendation from academic counselling for accommodation.

If you are not able to attend your oral presentation (worth 5%) on your scheduled day (due to medical/non-medical reasons), you may present later in the schedule (if available spaces remain). If no spaces are available, you may arrange to give your presentation to the professor in office hours or by zoom.

ATTENDANCE: Students must attend more than half (at least 7 out of 12) of the class meetings to pass the course, regardless of grades received for other assignments.

Course Materials

This course does not require students to purchase books/materials. Ebooks are available online through the library. For students who prefer, books can be purchased. All articles and other readings are available through the library course reserves without cost.

Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (2018).

Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Phillip's War* (2019).

Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (2006).

Daniel K. Richter, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Pasts* (2011).

Electronic Course Reserves for 24/7 Access to Reading Materials:

The books above will be available from the Western Bookstore, and an electronic copy (if available) will be placed on the library course reserves. Other articles (see weekly readings below) will be available through the Library's electronic course readings. Go to <http://www.lib.uwo.ca>, look under "Find" and click on "Course Readings" and then you will be prompted for your Western username and password, and then taken to a list of course readings that you can access. Then click on our class His4318G. The readings are arranged by the week of the course (i.e. readings for week 1 are at the top). Click on each reading for electronic access to the material.

In-class exercises (described under weekly topics below) are interactive learning opportunities (e.g. document analysis and discussion); they are not tests and they do not require any additional preparation, beyond completing the week's assigned readings.

Course Schedule and Readings

Note: THIS IS A TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AND LIST OF READINGS. A FINAL VERSION WILL BE UPLOADED TO BRIGHTSPACE BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS.

WEEKLY COURSE TOPICS AND READING SCHEDULE:

January 8, 2025

Week 1: BEFORE 1492

Readings:

Richter, to p.66. (i.e. ch1 “Legacies of Power from Medieval North America” and ch 2 “Legacies of Conquest from Medieval Europe.”

N. Scott Momaday, “The Becoming of the Native: Man in America before Columbus,” in *America in 1492: The World of the Indian Peoples Before the Arrival of Columbus* (New York, 1991), 13-19. (optional)

Ned Blackhawk, “Teaching the Columbian Exchange,” *Organization of American Historians, Magazine of History* (2013) 27:4, Special Issue on Pre-Contact America, 31-34.

In-class exercise: Primary Source Analysis. Richard Frethorne Letter (March/April 1623). We will read this primary source together and discuss. Discussion will foreshadow themes in week 2. You do not need to prepare for this. In-class exercises are for learning/discussion purposes and are not tests.

January 15, 2025

Week 2: Exploration, Conquest, Trade: Different Approaches of Spanish, French, English, and Dutch Empires

Readings:

Richter, chapter 3: “Crusades of the Christ-Bearers to the Americas,” chapter 4 “Crusades of the Protestants to the New Worlds.” and ch5 “Native Americans and the Power of Trade.”

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James Merrell, "The Indians' New World: The Catawba Experience," WMQ 3rd Ser., Vol 41 No. 4 (Oct 1984), 537-565.

Claudia Schnurmann on Indigenous-European networks and transatlantic trade In *The Worlds of the Seventeenth-Century Hudson Valley*, edited by Jaap Jacobs and L. H. Roper (2014). An essay on Dutch-Indigenous interaction. (Optional)

Adam Jortner, "The Empty Continent: Cartography, Pedagogy, and Native American History" in *Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians*, edited by Susan Sleeper Smith (2015).

In-class Exercise: Early North American maps as imperial tools and arguments about Empire. You do not need to prepare for this (other than reading Jortner). This is a hands-on exercise done in class and it is not a test.

January 22, 2025

Week 3. Missions in New France and New Spain

Readings:

Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (2006).

Daniel Murphree, "Promise and Disillusionment in the Shape of a Woman: Conquistadors in Florida and New France, A Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Early American History* (2017), vol 7, issue 3, pp.203-236.

Richter, chapter 6 "Epidemics, War, and the Remapping of a Continent."

BOOK REVIEW OF GREER is DUE at the beginning of week 3 class (if you are choosing to review this book).

January 29, 2025

Week 4: English Settlement: New England and Virginia

Readings:

Richter, ch7 "Searching for Order in New and Old England", ch8 "Planting Patriarchy in New England and Virginia and ch 9 "Dutch, French, Spanish, and English Counterpoints."

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Salisbury, Neal. "Treacherous Waters: Tisquantum, the Red Atlantic, and the Beginning of Plymouth Colony," *Early American Literature* (2021) Vol. 56 Issue 1.

Severson, Andrea. "Taming Pocahontas," *History Today* July 2018 Vol 68 Issue 7, pp.24-35.

In-Class: Mini Lecture on Squanto, Don Luis, Pocahontas: Kidnapped or Intercultural Intermediaries

In-Class Exercise: Primary Source analysis of John Rolfe letter to Governor Sir Thomas Dale (1614).

Reminder: Next week, on Feb 5, come ready to sign up for oral presentations in future weeks. I will provide information on the maximum number of students who can present each day.

February 5, 2025

Week 5: Late 17th Century Imperial and Settler-Indigenous Conflicts

Readings:

Lisa Brooks, *Our Beloved Kin: A New History of King Phillip's War* (2019)

Richter, chapter 10 "Monarchical Power Reborn" and chapter 11 "Planters Besieged". [These chapters consider nearly simultaneous uprisings of Bacon's Rebellion (Virginia) and Pueblo Revolt (New Spain). Chapter 11 is optional.]

BOOK REVIEW of Brooks is DUE at the beginning of week 5 class (if you are choosing to review this book).

In-Class: We'll start class with Mini Lectures on New England and Chesapeake in 1640s (useful for Short Written Assignment), followed by discussion of this week's readings focused on events of the 1670s.

In-Class Scheduling: We will also schedule in class today (Feb 5) everyone's oral presentation for weeks 8-11. Come to class ready to volunteer for a particular class (with first, second, third choices). I cannot guarantee that everyone will get their first choice, but I will do my best to be fair. Those who do not attend class this day are less likely to get their top choice, but they may email me following class with their requests and I will handle them after class meets, in the order I receive the emails.

February 12, 2025**Week 6: Other Models of English Empire: Pennsylvania and South Carolina, 1680-1750**

Readings:

Richter, ch12 “Revolution, War, and a New Transatlantic Order” on Glorious Revolution (1688), and ch13 “Producing and Consuming in an Atlantic Empire.”

Timothy P. Grady, “To ‘Vomit his Fury and Malice’: English Fears and Spanish Influences on the Exploration and Establishment of Carolina through 1670” *Proceedings of the South Carolina Historical Association* (2010), pp.31-42. (Read Grady or Morgan)

Philip D. Morgan, “Work and Culture: The Task System and the World of Lowcountry Blacks, 1700-1880,” *WMQ* (1982). (Read Morgan or Grady)

Sally Schwartz, “William Penn and Toleration: Foundations of Colonial Pennsylvania,” *Pennsylvania History* (Fall 1983) Vol 50 Issue 4, 284-312. (Read Schwartz or Parmenter).

Jon Parmenter, “Rethinking ‘William Penn’s Treaty with the Indians:’ Benjamin West, Thomas Penn, and the Legacy of Native-Newcomer Relations in Colonial Pennsylvania,” *Proteus* (2002) Vol 19, Issue 1, pp.38-44. (Read Parmenter or Schwartz).

Paul Douglas Newman, “The ‘Four Nations of Indians Upon the Susquehanna’: Mid-Atlantic Murder, Diplomacy, and Political Identity, 1717-1723,” *Pennsylvania History* (Summer 2021) Vol 88 Issue 3, pp.287-318.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE at beginning of class Week 6.

READING WEEK: FEBRUARY 15-23 (It begins 6 p.m. Friday prior to the third Monday in February and ends at 11:59 p.m. on the subsequent Sunday.) **NO CLASS ON FEBRUARY 19, 2025.**

February 26, 2025**Week 7: Slavery & New World Empires: Indigenous and African Slavery, 1660-1750**

Richter, ch14 “People in Motion: Enslaved and Free.”

Brett Rushforth, “A Little Flesh We Offer You’: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” *WMQ* 3rd Ser. Vol 60 Issue 4 (Oct 2003).

Edward Mair, “Slaves and Indians,” *History Today* (Feb 2020) Vol 70 Issue 2 pp.58-69.

Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (chapter 5 “Intimate Slavery” or chapter 6 “Law of the Land”)

Annette Gordon-Reed, “America’s Original Sin: Slavery and the Legacy of White Supremacy,” *Foreign Affairs* (Jan/Feb 2018) Vol. 97, Issue 1.

Antonio T. Bly, “Indubitable Signs: Reading Silence as Text in New England Runaway Slave Advertisements,” *Slavery and Abolition* (April 2021) Volume 42 Issue 2, pp. 240-268.

In-Class Exercise: Runaway Slave Advertisements

SHORT WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF WEEK 7 CLASS.

March 5, 2025**Week 8: The West**

Ned Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (2018).

Student Oral Presentations: Up to 4 students may choose to present on their Research Papers in Progress.

BOOK REVIEW of Blackhawk is DUE at the beginning of week 8 class (if you are choosing to review this book).

March 12, 2025

Week 9—Student Oral Presentations on their Research Papers in Progress. (Up to 8 students)

There are no assigned readings for week 9 & 10. Students will be reading materials for their own research papers.

BOOK REVIEW of Richter is DUE at the beginning of week 9 class (if you are choosing to review this book). Note that you may submit it earlier, so you have more time to work on your final paper.

March 19, 2025

Week 10– Student Oral Presentations on their Research Papers In Progress. If necessary due to the number of enrolled students, some students could present in week 10. (Up to 8 students)

March 26, 2025**Week 11: Seven Years' War**

Richter, Ch15 “Contending for a Continent” and Ch 16 “Gloomy and Dark Days”.

Christian Ayne Crouch, *Nobility Lost: French and Canadian Martial Cultures, Indians, and the End of New France* (2014), chapter 1 & 2.

D. P. MacLeod, “Microbes and muskets: Smallpox and the participation of Amerindian allies of New France in the Seven Years War.” *Ethnohistory* Winter 1992 Vol 39 Issue 1 pp.42-65.

Student Oral Presentations. Up to 2 students will present on their Research Papers In Progress, in the event of illness or other need for accommodation.

April 2, 2025

Week 12: American Revolution

D.H. Robinson, *The Idea of Europe and the Origins of the American Revolution* (2020), chapter 10 “Arbitress of the Universe: Empires, Futures, and Revolutionary Geopolitics,” pp. 337-378.

Woody Holton, “Rebel Against Rebel: Enslaved Virginians and the Coming of the American Revolution,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (1997) Vol. 105 Issue 2. (Read Holton or Pearsall)

Sarah M. S. Pearsall, “Recentring Indian Women in the American Revolution,” in *Why You Can’t Teach United States History without American Indians*, edited by Susan Sleeper-Smith and Juliana Barr (Chapel Hill, 2015). (Read Pearsall or Holton)

Christopher L. Brown, “Empire Without Slaves: British Concepts of Emancipation in the Age of the American Revolution,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser., (1999), Vol 56 Issue 2, pp. 273- . 34 pp. (read Brown or Ritter)

Luke Ritter, “The American Revolution on the Periphery of Empires: Don Bernardo de Gálvez and the Spanish-American Alliance, 1763-1783,” *Journal of Early American History* (2017), Vol 17 Issue 2, 177-201. (read Ritter or Brown)

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE on April 2, 2025. Note that I cannot accept any late papers beyond April 4 (the last day of classes) without a recommendation from academic counselling.

Other dates: The drop date for Winter term B&G courses is March 31, 2025. Classes end on April 4. April 5 & 6 are Study Days. The Final examination period is April 7-30.

This course does not have a final examination.

Additional Statements

Communication policies: The best way to reach me is to email (nrhoden@uwo.ca). Some questions can be answered by email, and for other questions or purposes (e.g. to discuss the topic of a course paper) it would be better to meet in person or by zoom. You also may come to my office during office hours with or without an appointment. If you need to meet at a time

other than my office hours, send me an email request, because I can offer appointments at other times in the week.

Use of electronic devices: Laptops or tablets (etc.) may be used in class if doing so promotes your engagement with class (e.g. to refer to your notes or an electronic reading/text, or to look something up). I ask that you please avoid using electronic devices in a manner that is likely to distract you from class participation or might distract others who can possibly see your screen. You should not use audio or video recording devices without permission.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI): The use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, is permitted in specific situations in this course. There are ethical and non-ethical uses of this technology, and there are well-documented limitations of this technology, all of which are worth considering seriously. One of the goals of this course is to provide an opportunity for you to enhance writing skills and to learn or improve skills related to conducting historical research, thinking critically and creatively, analyzing evidence, and advancing a persuasive argument. In other words, I want you to build transferrable skills and not rely exclusively on generative AI in a manner that would deprive you of a learning opportunities and/or put your academic integrity at risk. The use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, is permitted in this course for activities such as brainstorming and refining your ideas, drafting an outline to organize your thoughts, or checking grammar and style. Any use of such tools should be clearly acknowledged and explained. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification. For further resources, you may want to see *Western's site for AI guidance* or to the *Centre for Teaching and Learning's resources on academic integrity and AI*.

Other Important Departmental Policies: Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at: https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.