

Global Commodity Histories, 1500-2000

HIS 381

Satisfies: DIV, GLO, SBS+ [DEC: J]

Thematic Categories:

Empires, Violence & Global Connections; Health, Science & Environmental Change

MW, 2:40-4pm

Professor Paul Gootenberg

The Americas have been a crucial part of globalization since 1500. This theme survey uses an exciting new historical literature—about the history of world commodities—to learn about the connections and contributions of the Americas to the world economy and world culture. Students will encounter such goods as cacao (chocolate), sugar, silver, cochineal (a dye), rice, coffee, guano (a fertilizer), rubber, bananas, and cocaine, and the unique ways their hidden histories and worldly trading and consumer cultures shed light on the history of the Americas and global consumption. Students read and discuss three class books and write brief book essays on the subject.