

History of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

HIST 535-002/615-009/635-003

Fall 2017

Mondays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm, Robinson B333

Dr. Jane Hooper

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Office: Robinson B369 A

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30 pm, Thursdays 10:30-11:130 am, or by appointment

Course Description:

More than twelve million Africans were loaded onto slave ships and transported to the Americas between 1500 and 1866. This forced migration had a lasting impact on the peoples of Africa, the Americas, and Europe. The aftershocks of the trade can still be felt in politics in the United States, scholarly debates in Africa, and arguments over reparations for those negatively impacted by the trade on both sides of the Atlantic.

This course will focus on the history of the transatlantic slave trade by examining the developments in Europe, Africa, and the Americas between 1500 and 1870 that influenced this diaspora. The scholarly debates to be discussed will include conceptions of race in a transatlantic context, the impact of the slave trade on African communities, resistance in the Americas and onboard slave ships, and global pressures towards abolition. In addition to writing weekly short papers and assisting with leading discussions, students will engage in a short research project on a topic of their choice.

Goals:

1. Students will discuss and understand major historiographical developments in the study of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The course will also examine comparative and global slavery, with a focus on historical events in Europe, the Americas, and Africa.
2. Students will compare different research methods and source materials used by scholars. We will discuss how historians attempt to understand the experiences of people who were enslaved in spite of severe source limitations.
3. Students will analyze and interpret primary and secondary source material by employing techniques used by historians. The reading skills we will work on in the class will assist you in engaging with scholarship in the field of history more broadly.

4. Students will express themselves clearly and concisely as historians, in writing as well as through oral presentations and in discussions.

Grading and expectations:

Participation: This class is participatory and, in order to get the most from class, you need to attend every class prepared and having thought about the assigned reading(s). If you have poor class participation – due largely to absences, i.e., your non-presence during discussions – your final grade will fall dramatically. In other words, if you average a B on assignments and exams but fail to participate consistently, your final mark will be a C. If you are absent for more than two classes (and do not provide an adequate excuse in a timely manner – i.e., notify the instructor after your second missed class), you will lose points from your class participation grade. **Note: the instructor will not re-teach a missed class via email or during an office conference.**

Classroom Etiquette: **You may not use cell phones, laptops, or any other electronic devices in the classroom** unless they are being used for a classroom activity as indicated by the instructor. Please arrive on time and pack up your things only when the lecture or discussion has completely finished. **Any violation of these rules will significantly lower your participation grade.**

Weekly Papers: You will complete one-page papers (200-300 words) reflecting on our discussions and readings for the week. These papers are to be submitted through the course blackboard site **before noon on the day of class**. You must provide proper footnote citations for each paper. Out of 12 weekly papers listed on the syllabus, you will be graded on 10 of these papers. Late weekly papers will not be accepted for any reason.

Discussion Leading: You will sign up to lead discussion with a classmate once during the semester. You **must meet at least 24 hours before class** to discuss the questions you will ask. Then **you will either meet** with Dr. Hooper to discuss your proposed questions **or email** the questions to Dr. Hooper at least 24 hours before class. You will be graded on the quality of your questions, your mastery of the material, and your individual contribution to the discussion.

Research Paper: In this class you will write a research paper (roughly 12-20 pages) on a topic of your choice relating to the transatlantic slave trade. The format of the paper is relatively flexible. You could choose to write a historiographical essay comparing secondary sources, a paper more focused on primary source research, or provide a description for a proposed museum exhibit. Portions of this project will be submitted throughout the semester. A paper outlining your chosen topic will be submitted in the form of a **short proposal** describing your research focus and proposed avenues for research. Next, you will submit an **annotated bibliography** of the sources you plan on using in your paper. You will make a brief **presentation** of your findings the last day of class, along with your outline for the final paper, and incorporate feedback from this presentation in your **final paper**.

Final Grade:

Class participation - 20% (based on the quality and quantity of your contributions)

Discussion leading - 5%

Weekly papers (10 total) - 25%

Research paper topic – 5%

Research paper bibliography – 5%

Presentation – 10%

Final research paper – 30%

Note - Papers will be submitted through the course blackboard site. Late papers will not be accepted without Dr. Hooper's advance permission, i.e. before the assignment is due. **It is your responsibility to ensure papers are properly submitted and received on time.**

Office of Disability Services: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. See <http://ods.gmu.edu>.

Note about Communications: Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information. Blackboard will be used to post important messages, links for readings, and grades for papers.

Other Important Campus Resources:

The Writing Center: Robinson A114, <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

University Libraries: <http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

Counseling and Psychological Services: 703-993-2380, <http://caps.gmu.edu>

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another source without giving that source credit. Writers give credit through the use of accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes; a simple listing of books, articles, and websites is not sufficient. Plagiarism cannot be tolerated in an academic setting.

Student writers are often confused as to what should be cited. Some think that only direct quotations need to be credited; this is incorrect. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions to this rule include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources—what has been called common knowledge—or the writers' own insights or findings from their own field research. What constitutes common knowledge can sometimes be precarious; what is common knowledge for one audience may be so for another. In such situations, it is helpful to keep the reader in mind and to think of citations as being "reader friendly."

In other words, writers provide a citation for any piece of information that they think their readers might be unfamiliar with and want to investigate or debate further. Not only is this attitude considerate of readers, it will almost certainly ensure that writers will not be guilty of plagiarism.

Cheating means to get help on an assignment without permission. This includes asking another classmate to "see" their paper before writing your own paper OR hiring someone to "edit" your paper. Allowing another student to see your work without permission from the instructor is also considered cheating. You must get permission from your instructor before asking anyone outside of your professors, writing center tutors, or teaching assistants for help on assignments. If you don't understand an assignment, you need to ask the professor for clarification rather than your classmates.

In this course, you will be expected to adhere to the Honor Code at George Mason. We will discuss the use of citations and quotations throughout the semester. If you have any questions on how to cite a source, please see Dr. Hooper.

Texts Available for Purchase in the Bookstore:

- David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: the Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- Randy J. Sparks, *Where the Negroes are Masters: an African Port in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014). (Also available online through the GMU library catalog)
- Robert W. Harms, *The Diligent: a Voyage through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002). (Also available online through the GMU library catalog)
- James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). (Also available online through the GMU library catalog)
- Matt D. Childs, *The 1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba and the Struggle against Atlantic Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). (Also available online through the GMU library catalog)
- Richard B. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014). (Also available online through the GMU library catalog)
- Joel Quirk, *The Anti-Slavery Project: from the Slave Trade to Human Trafficking* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). (Also available online through the GMU library catalog)
- Ana Lucia Araujo, *Shadows of the Slave Past: Memory, Heritage, and Slavery* (New York: Routledge, 2014).

* If you choose to read a book online, be aware that only a limited number of the books can be checked out at a time. I would advise reading far in advance of the schedule or downloading the required readings to ensure availability. You can also request a copy of the book via WRLC or ILL.*

Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change. Please consult the course blackboard site for updated course information.

* Note: all readings are to be completed before the class in which they will be discussed.

Overviews of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

August 28: Introductions and class expectations.

Readings in class (excerpts available on course blackboard site):

- James Rawley and Stephen D. Behrendt, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: a History* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 1-2.
- David Eltis, "The Cultural Roots of African Slavery," in *The Atlantic Slave Trade*, edited by David Northrup, second edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 24-9.
- James H. Sweet, "Reimagining the African-Atlantic Archive: Method, Concept, Epistemology, Ontology," *Journal of African History* 55, no. 2 (2014): 147-50.

Suggested Readings:

- Philip Curtin, *et al.*, *African History from Earliest Times to Independence* (2nd ed.) (London: Longman Press, 1995).
- Christopher Ehret, *The Civilizations of Africa: a History to 1800* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2002).
- John Iliffe, *Africans: the History of a Continent* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- Herbert Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- John Parker and Richard Rathbone, *African History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

September 4: no class

September 11: Researching the trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

*** We will meet in Fenwick Library (room 1014A) on September 11 to discuss research methods.** * Bring a list of topics you are considering for the research paper.

Required Reading:

- Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*. Focus on the first four chapters.

Suggested Reading:

- David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Weekly paper #1 due

September 18: Understanding the Numbers * **Bring a laptop with you to class**

Required Readings:

- Philip D. Morgan, "The Cultural Implications of the Atlantic Slave Trade: African Regional Origins, American Destinations and New World Developments," *Slavery & Abolition* 18, no 1 (1997): 122-145.
- David Eltis, David Richardson, David Brion Davis, and David W. Blight, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), chapter 3 (pp. 87-158). Read the introductory section and glance through the maps and images. (Available online through the GMU library catalog)

Suggested Readings:

- Richard Anderson, Alex Borucki, Daniel Domingues da Silva, David Eltis, Paul Lachance, Philip Misevich, and Olatunji Ojo, "Using African Names to Identify the Origins of Captives in the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Crowd-Sourcing and the Registers of Liberated Africans, 1808–1862." *History in Africa* 40, no. 1 (2013): 165–91.
- Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat. "Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America." *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (2015): 433–61.
- David Eltis, "The Volume and Structure of the Transatlantic Slave Trade: a Reassessment," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, 1 (2001): 17- 46.
- Daniel Domingues Da Silva, David Eltis, Philip Misevich, and Olatunji Ojo, "The Diaspora of Africans Liberated from Slave Ships in the Nineteenth Century." *The Journal of African History* 55, no. 3 (2014): 347–69.

Weekly paper #2 due

Paper topic due

In class – choose discussion leaders

September 25: "Truth," slave narratives, and Equiano

Required Readings:

- Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa), *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-88). (There are multiple versions of this book, including one online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/equiano1/menu.html> which is used here for the page numbers).
- Vincent Carretta, "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa? New Light on an Eighteenth-century Question of Identity" *Slavery & abolition* 20, no. 3 (1999): 96-105.
- James H. Sweet, "Mistaken Identities? Olaudah Equiano, Domingos Álvares, and the Methodological Challenges of Studying the African Diaspora," *The American Historical Review* 114, no. 2 (2009): 279-306.

Suggested readings:

- Jerome S. Handler, 'Survivors of the Middle Passage: Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in British America', *Slavery and Abolition* 23, no. 1 (2002): 25–56
- Other individual accounts at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/>.

Weekly paper #3 due

The Organization of the Slave Trade

October 2: Trafficking in Africa

Required Readings:

- Sparks, *Where the Negroes are Masters*.
- Stephen Behrendt. *The Diary of Antera Duke: an Eighteenth-Century African Slave Trader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Skim a few pages of the diary. (Available online through the GMU library catalog)

Suggested readings:

- Edda Fields-Black, *Deep Roots: Rice Farmers in West Africa and the African Diaspora* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
- Toby Green, *The Rise of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Western Africa, 1300-1589* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Weekly paper #4 due

October 9: no class

October 10: The experience of the “Middle Passage”

Required Readings:

- Harms, *The Diligent*. Focus on parts 8 –10 (chapters 26-37)
- Alexander Falconbridge, *An account of the slave trade on the coast of Africa* (London, 1788), 1-55. Examine the passages related to the treatment of slaves. There are different versions available; please read the one available through *Sabin Americana* (search in the GMU library catalog).

Suggested Readings:

- Robert Ross, “The Dutch on the Swahili Coast, 1776-1778: Two Slaving Journals, Part 1,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 19 (1986): 305-360 and “Part 2.”

Weekly paper #5 due

October 16: Indian and African slaves in the Indian Ocean world

Required Readings:

- Allen, *European Slave Trading*, especially chapters 2 and 4
- Selected primary sources (see blackboard website)

Suggested Readings:

- Ehud Toledano, *As if Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
- Joseph C. Miller, "A Theme in Variations: A Historical Schema of Slavery in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Regions," *Slavery & Abolition* 24, 2 (2003).
- Gwyn Campbell, "Slavery, Forced Labour, and Resistance in the Indian Ocean," *Slavery & Abolition* 25 (2004): ix-xxvii.
- Pier Larson, *Ocean of Letters: Language and Creolization in an Indian Ocean Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- Meghan Vaughan, *Creating the Creole Island: Slavery in Eighteenth-Century Mauritius* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

Weekly paper #6 due

Africans in the Americas: Resistance and Revolution

October 23: Trans-Oceanic Connections

Required Reading:

- Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*

Suggested Readings:

- Walter Hawthorne. *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- John Thornton, "The Kingdom of Kongo and Palo Mayombe: Reflections on an African-American Religion," *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 1 (2016): 1–22.
- Judith A. Carney, *Black Rice: the African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
- David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson, "Agency and Diaspora in Atlantic History: Reassessing the African Contribution to Rice Cultivation in the Americas," *The American Historical Review* 112, 5 (2007): 1329-1358.
- James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).
- *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil during the Era of Slavery*, eds. José C. Curto and Paul E. Lovejoy (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2004).
- Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

Weekly paper #7 due

October 30: African resistance in the Atlantic world

Required Readings:

- Childs, *1812 Aponte Rebellion in Cuba*

Suggested Readings:

- John K. Thornton, "‘I Am the Subject of the King of Congo’: African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution." *Journal of World History* 4, no. 2 (1993): 181–214.
- João José Reis, *Slave rebellion in Brazil: the Muslim uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1995).

Weekly paper #8 due

Bibliography due

Abolition and Emancipation

November 6: Slave narratives in the age of abolition

Required Readings:

- Randy M. Browne, and John Wood Sweet, "Florence Hall’s ‘Memoirs’: Finding African Women in the Transatlantic Slave Trade," *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 1 (2016): 206–21.
- Lisa A. Lindsay, "The Autobiography of Jacob Von Brunn, from African Captive to Liberian Missionary," *Slavery & Abolition* 37, no. 2 (2016): 446–71.

Suggested Readings:

- Trevor R. Getz, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
- Marcia Wright, *Strategies of Slaves & Women: Life-Stories from East/Central Africa* (New York: L. Barber Press, 1993).

Weekly paper #9 due

November 13: The anti-slavery project

Required Reading:

- Quirk, *Anti-slavery Project* (focus on chapters 1-3).
- Samuël Coghe, "The Problem of Freedom in a Mid Nineteenth-Century Atlantic Slave Society: The Liberated Africans of the Anglo-Portuguese Mixed Commission in Luanda (1844–1870)," *Slavery & Abolition* 33, no. 3 (2012): 479–500.

Suggested Readings:

- Walton Look Lai, *Indentured Labor, Caribbean Sugar: Chinese and Indian Migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).
- David Northrup, "Slavery in the Twentieth Century: The Evolution of a Global Problem," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38, no. 1 (2005): 159 – 160.
- *Many Middle Passages: Forced Migration and the Making of the Modern World*, eds. Emma Christopher, Cassandra Pybus, Marcus Rediker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).
- Emma Christopher, *A Merciless Place: the Fate of Britain's Convicts after the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Weekly paper #10 due

November 20: Anti-slavery and memories of enslavement in East Africa

Required Readings:

- Lindsay Doultson, " 'The Flag that Sets Us Free': Antislavery, Africans, and the Royal Navy in the Western Indian Ocean," in *Indian Ocean Slavery in the Age of Abolition*, eds. Robert Harms, Bernard K. Freamon, and David W. Blight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 101-119. (Available online through the GMU library catalog)
- Steven Fabian, "East Africa's Gorée: Slave Trade and Slave Tourism in Bagamoyo, Tanzania," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 47, no. 1 (2013): 95-114.

Recommended Readings:

- W. G. Clarence-Smith, *Islam and the Abolition of Slavery* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2006).
- Paul Lovejoy, *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004).
- *Slavery, Islam, and Diaspora*, eds. Paul Lovejoy, Behnaz Mirzai, and Ismael Montana (Trenton, Africa World Press, 2010).

Weekly paper #11 due

November 27: Remembrances of the slave trade and slavery

Required Reading:

- Araujo, *Shadows of the Slave Past*
- "Valongo Wharf Archaeological Site," UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1548/>) (see also the Ana Lucia Araujo on <https://africandiasporaphd.com/2017/07/19/video-valongo-wharf-on-slavery-archive-tv/>)

Suggested readings:

- Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017).
- Saidiya Hartman. *Lose your Mother: a Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008).
- Rosalind Shaw, *Memories of the Slave Trade: Ritual and the Historical Imagination in Sierra Leone* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

Weekly paper #12 due

December 4: Presentations

Final Papers are due by email on December 13 before 5 pm. No late papers will be accepted!