Comparative Slave Trades
HIST 535-DL1
Spring 2022
Thursdays, 7:20-10 pm – online (zoom link available on course blackboard site)

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Questions?
* Send Dr. Hooper an email at jhooper3@gmu.edu - I will try to respond within 24 hours during the week (it will take me more time on weekends).
* Send an email and request a private zoom meeting.

Resources:
* For help with online learning, check out GMU Learning Services at this link.
* If you’re struggling with mental health issues, reach out to CAPS – they offer a range of free help for students (including after-hours crisis services). For more resources focused on emotional and mental well-being, click on this link.
* Issues with technology? Check out the resources provided at this link. If you can’t find the answers there, you should reach out to the ITS Support Center for help (their contact information is here). Remember: completion of assignments is your responsibility and technological issues do not constitute an excuse. Reach out the instructor as soon as possible if you run into difficulties.
* Need assistance with writing assignments for this class? Make an appointment to work with a tutor online through the Writing Center (instructions for how to schedule a session are found here).
* 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 (their website is here) and communicated to the professor in a timely manner.

Note about Communications: Students must use their Mason email account to receive important University information. Blackboard will be used for posting lectures, discussions, and the submission of assignments.
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. Rather than solely focusing on the Atlantic, however, this course will examine slave trading from a global perspective. We will place the more well-known trans-Atlantic slave trade alongside other forms of coerced labor migration during the early modern period. Much of the course will focus on the major economic, political, and cultural factors that influenced forced migrations across the Atlantic between 1500 and 1870. These factors will be compared with those that influenced the trafficking of African and Asian peoples across the Indian Ocean and Pacific. Topics of discussion will include conceptions of race, cultural contributions by diasporic communities, modes of resistance, and global pressures toward 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 choosing.

Goals:

1. Students will discuss and understand major historiographical developments in the study of slave trades, 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). When we meet online, you are expected to actively participate – preferably orally and with your camera on (you may mute your microphone when you are not speaking).

The standard participation grade for students who occasionally offer thoughtful opinions in class will be an 80%. Students who are more active participants will receive a higher grade and those who rarely speak will be given a lower grade. If you have questions about your participation grade, please speak with the instructor. If you have poor class participation due to absences – i.e., your non-presence during discussions – your final participation grade will be a zero. 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 first missed class), you will lose points from your class participation grade. Class meetings will be recorded and posted on blackboard. Note that viewing these videos if you miss class is recommended but will not count toward your participation grade.

Discussion Leading: You will sign up to lead discussion with a classmate once during the semester. Both of you must post at least four questions to our blackboard site by Tuesday before midnight (prior to the class for which we are discussing the material). You will be graded on the quality of each question. Be prepared to explain your choice of these questions in class!

Discussion Posts: You will respond to at least one discussion question posed by your classmates each week. Your response should demonstrate a close reading of the assigned texts and engagement with the topics raised by your classmates. There will be 12 weeks with discussion postings throughout the semester. You must post at least 10 times to receive full credit. You will be graded (pass/fail) for your posts. Posts must be made by midnight on Wednesday prior to our discussion in order to receive credit. Late posts will not be accepted.

Reflection Papers: You will complete one or two-page papers weekly, reflecting on our discussions and readings from the previous week. These papers are to be submitted through the course blackboard site before midnight the Sunday following our class. You must provide proper footnote citations for each paper. Out of 11 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.

Book Review (due March 24 by midnight): You will choose a book published within the last ten years that deals with some aspect of slavery and slave trading. You will write a book review of this selection, conforming to the standards of a professional historical journal (American Historical Review, Journal of Social History, etc). The book review should be approximately 2-4 pages in length. This should not be a chapter-by-chapter summary of the main book’s contents,
but rather a higher-level analysis of the book’s argument and method, exploring the key evidence and themes that support and develop that argument.

Final Paper: In this class you will write a longer paper (roughly 12-20 pages) on a topic of your choice relating to comparative slave trades. The format of the paper is relatively flexible. You could choose to write a historiographical essay comparing secondary sources (this should include at least five sources from our course), a paper focused on primary source research, or provide a description for a proposed museum exhibit. On April 17 (by midnight) you will submit a proposal, including a description of the paper and a list of the sources you plan on using in your paper. You will make a brief presentation of your findings at the end of the semester, along with your outline for the final paper, and incorporate feedback from this presentation in your final paper (due May 13 by midnight).

Final Grade:
Class participation - 20% (based on the quality and quantity of your contributions)
Discussion leading - 5%
Discussion posts (10 total) – 10%
Reflection papers (10 total) - 20%
Book review – 15%
Final paper –
  - topic proposal and bibliography – 5%
  - final paper – 25%

Final grades will be determined using the following ranges:
91.8-100 A
90-91.7 A-
88.3-89.9 B+
81.8-88.2 B
80-81.7 B-
78.3-79.9 C+
71.8-78.2 C
70-71.7 C-
60-69.9 D

Note: Papers will be submitted through the course blackboard site. It is your responsibility to ensure papers are properly submitted and received on time; technological issues are your responsibility to resolve. If you anticipate a problem in completing or submitting your work on time, you must contact the instructor in a timely manner. If you do not hear back from your instructor, you should assume that your work is due on the original date. Late papers submitted
without prior approval will be penalized by a full letter grade for every 24-hours they are submitted late. **No late work will be accepted for the final assignment.**

**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](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](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)
University Libraries: [http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html](http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html)
Counseling and Psychological Services: 703-993-2380, [http://caps.gmu.edu](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.

**Assigned Books:**

All readings, aside from Morgan, *Short History*, are available online or at library.gmu.edu


Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change. Check your email and blackboard for updates.
* Note: all readings are to be completed before the class in which they will be discussed.

January 27: Introductions

Before class:
Prepare:
- look through material posted on the course blackboard site
- make sure you have an up-to-date version of Zoom downloaded, your camera and microphone work, and that you know how to log into zoom using your Mason credentials (if you do not know how to do so, please contact IT support ASAP).

Readings:
- essays on Voyages: the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (slavevoyages.org → trans-Atlantic → Essays – start with “A brief overview of the trans-Atlantic slave trade”)

Watch:
- 3D videos of slaving vessels at slavevoyages.org (Marie-Séraphique and L’Aurore)

* Discussion post due January 26 before midnight

February 3: Overview of trans-Atlantic slaving

Reading:
- Morgan, A Short History of Transatlantic Slavery

* Discussion post due February 2 before midnight
* Reflection paper due February 6 before midnight

February 10: Sources for studying the Atlantic African Diaspora

Reading:
- 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).

* Discussion post due February 9 before midnight
* Reflection paper due February 13 before midnight

February 17: West African political developments and slave trafficking

Reading:
- Candido, African Slaving Port
* Discussion post due February 16 before midnight
* Reflection paper due February 20 before midnight

**February 24:** African influences in the Atlantic world (1)
*Reading:*
  - Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*

* Discussion post due February 23 before midnight
* Reflection paper due February 27 before midnight

**March 3:** African influences in the Atlantic world (2)
*Reading:*
  - Kananoja, *Healing Knowledge in Atlantic Africa*

* Discussion post due March 2 before midnight
* Reflection paper due March 6 before midnight

**March 10:** Slave trade in the Indian Ocean
*Reading:*
  - Allen, *European Slave Trading*, especially chapters 2 and 4

* Discussion post due March 9 before midnight
* Reflection paper due March 13 before midnight

**March 24:** No class
* Book review due March 24 by midnight

**March 31:** Influences of the diaspora in the Indian Ocean
*Reading:*
  - *Many Middle Passages*, chapters 1 and 3.

* Discussion post due March 30 before midnight
* Reflection paper due April 3 before midnight

**April 7:** Slavery and resistance in Asia
*Reading:
- Wickramasinghe, *Slave in a Palanquin*.

* Discussion post due April 6 before midnight
* Reflection paper due April 10 before midnight

**April 14:** Abolitionism

*Reading:*
- *Liberated Africans,* read introduction and one other chapter of your choice.
- Quirk, *Anti-Slavery project,* chapters 1-3.

* Discussion post due April 13 before midnight
* Reflection paper due April 17 before midnight
* Final paper proposal due April 17 by midnight

**April 21:** Abolitionism in the Indian Ocean

*Reading:*
- Peabody, *Madeleine’s Children*

* Discussion post due April 20 before midnight
* Reflection paper due April 24 before midnight

**April 28:** Remembrances and public history; presentations (day 1)

*Reading:*
- Araujo, *Museums and Atlantic Slavery*

* Discussion post due April 27 before midnight
* Reflection paper due May 1 before midnight

**May 5:** Final reflections and presentations (day 2)

* Final paper due May 13 by midnight*