Comparative Slavery (Topics in Digital History)
HIST 366/395, Fall 2022

1:30-2:45 pm, Tuesdays and Thursdays

Dr. Jane Hooper
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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.
* Set up an in-person meeting (office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10-11 am). Please email in advance.

Resources:
* For help with 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).
* 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. I encourage you to inform me of how you wish to be addressed by name and by pronouns before the start of class so I may properly address you in class and via email. I use she/her/hers as my pronouns. You may address me as Dr. Hooper.

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. The mass movement of people from one continent to another was unprecedented in human history and the forced migration of these Africans 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 issues such as reparations for those negatively impacted by the trade.

Rather than solely focusing on the Atlantic, however, this course will examine slavery and slave trading from a global perspective. We will place the more well-known trans-Atlantic slave trade alongside other forms of coerced labor migration. In order to engage in this comparative project, students will examine a variety of publicly available databases constructed by scholars. Students will learn about how these digital history projects are transforming the field. They will also use online datasets to engage in a short research project on a topic of their choosing.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will learn about the scale and chronology of slavery around the world. Students will also compare the practice of slavery in Africa, the Americas, and other locations.
2. Students will gain a better understanding of the history and culture of Africa and how it was connected to other Atlantic world societies, c. 16th to 19th centuries.
3. Students will learn how to analyze and think critically about a variety of sources – oral histories, archeological data, and colonial documents – to make sense of the history of slave
trade. Particular attention will be paid to how these sources have been communicated by scholars through online databases.

5. Students will use online datasets to grapple with major historical debates on the topic of comparative slavery.

**Commitment to an inclusive, antiracist learning environment:**

Public higher education in the United States – and George Mason University, specifically – ideally exists to foster a more free, just, and democratic society. Racism – systemic and otherwise – is among the most pernicious barriers to the realization of that mission. George Mason and this instructor are all committed to confronting the realities of race and racism head on; we are committed to establishing learning environments that are welcoming, inclusive, and equitable; and we are committed to breaking down the barriers to freedom, justice, and democracy posed by racism. This is challenging work, and I acknowledge that at times, we – and I – will fall short. If you feel that our learning environment does not meet these standards, please do not hesitate to tell me. I am committed to listening, to hearing you, and to working together to create an inclusive, antiracist learning environment.

**Engaging with Hard History:**

At times, this course will take many of us (including the instructor) into areas of inquiry, historical and current, that will be challenging and unsettling. We may be anxious and uncertain as to how to engage when faced with some of these topics, but these responses should be taken as evidence of the importance of our confrontation with them. In all of our interactions, you must commit to participating in our conversations with respect, tolerance, curiosity, and forthrightness. You must be willing to contribute to the conversation, to give others space to offer their views, and to listen generously and carefully. While you will certainly disagree with me and with one another at times, we expect and, in fact, demand that you interact as colleagues and treat each other with mutual respect and tolerance.
Conduct that does not comply will not be acceptable. If, at any point, you feel that our learning environment falls short of these standards of mutual respect and tolerance – or I have fallen short of this standard – please do not hesitate to tell me.

Acknowledgement Statements:

Land Acknowledgement

A land acknowledgment engages all present in an ongoing indigenous protocol to enact meaningful, reciprocal relationships with ancestors and contemporary tribal nations. As a state university, we have a responsibility to include and support indigenous communities and sovereign tribes in our work.

At the place George Mason University occupies, we give greetings and thanksgivings:

- to these Potomac River life sources,
- to the Doeg ancestors, who Virginia annihilated in violent campaigns while ripping their lands
- apart with the brutal system of African American enslavement,
- to the recognized Virginia tribes who have lovingly stewarded these lands for millennia
- including the Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Upper Mattaponi, Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Nansemond, Monacan, Mattaponi, Patawomeck, and Nottaway, past, present,
- and future, and
- to the Piscataway tribes, who have lived on both sides of the river from time immemorial.

Acknowledging the History of Enslavement on GMU Lands

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1 Dr. Gabrielle Tayac, Department of History and Art History. See also https://legacies.gmu.edu/about/landacknowledgement-statement.
2 Dr. Sheri Ann Huerta, Department of History and Art History, Honors College. Research provided by Dr. Benedict Carton, Center for Mason Legacies, https://silverbox.gmu.edu/legacy/s/blnd/page/pasts-next-door.
We acknowledge the enslaved persons who were forced to labor for more than 200 years on the lands that are now home to George Mason University. Most of these men, women, and children will never be known to us due to the racist policies that tried to strip away their humanity. We honor Linah Thornton, Surah, Siriah, Lego, Anna, Lewis, Louisa, and Cato and the many unknown, but not forgotten, enslaved laborers who left their imprints on this land and place.

**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). Please note that being present does not simply mean that one makes it to our face-to-face class meetings; it means engaging with the course – the texts, the assignments, and with the other members of our classroom community – in ways that raises questions about the content, adds to the content, interprets the content in multiple viewpoints, and makes connections to the content.

The standard participation grade for students who occasionally participate thoughtfully in class and during groupwork will be an 80%. Students who are more active participants will receive a higher grade and those who refuse to work in small groups will be given a lower grade. If you have poor class participation due to absences – i.e., your non-presence during classes – your final grade will be a zero. If you are absent for more than four 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.

*Discussion Leading:* During the semester, you will be introducing our discussion once with two other students. You will be responsible for spending between ten and fifteen minutes at the beginning of class introducing major themes and issues for discussion for the class through whatever media you find appropriate (the material must be related to the class, please see the instructor if you have questions about the quality of what you have found). You will also provide the class with at least two discussion questions to start our discussion. You will be individually graded on the quality of your presentation. A grading rubric is posted on blackboard.
***Weekly Assignments:*** You will complete short assignments that will assist you in understanding the course material. Papers are to be submitted through the course blackboard site **before midnight on the Wednesday prior to class.** You will receive a score of 1 (adequately addressed the assigned question) or 0 (did not fulfill the assignment) for each paper. Out of 10 weekly assignments listed on the syllabus, you will be graded on 8 of these papers. Late weekly papers will not be accepted for any reason.

***Worksheets:*** You will fill out a brief worksheet for each of the three databases we will be looking at in length during the semester (*SlaveVoyages, The Searchable Museum, Enslaved, the one you choose for your final paper*). Each worksheet will receive a separate grade.

***Short Paper:*** You will write one short paper around mid-term time, focused on *The Two Princes of Calabar.* This paper will be about 3-4 pages in length and necessitate the use of footnote citations. Separate guide for this assignment will be posted on blackboard.

***Final Research Paper:*** You will write a longer paper (roughly 5-7 pages in length) focused on identifying and evaluating an online dataset about the experience of slavery to answer a research question. Further information will be given for this assignment during the semester and be posted on blackboard.

***Exam Rules and Deadlines:*** In accordance with university regulations, professors in the Department of History and Art History re-schedule exams after receiving documentation of a medical emergency or family emergency; often this documentation must be verified by the Dean of Student Life. **Work-related or personal/family obligations are not adequate excuses for re-scheduling an exam or obtaining any kind of extension.** Note: September 6 is the last day to drop classes with no tuition penalty; September 27 is the final day for selective withdrawal (100% tuition liability). If you have questions about registering for this class, please speak with your academic advisor.

***Final Grade:***
Participation - 15% (based on the quantity and quality of your contributions)
Discussion leading – 5%
Reaction Papers (8 total) - 15%
Worksheets (4) – 15% total (the four worksheets totaled together)
Short Paper – 20%
Final Research paper – 30%

**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
59.9 and below F

**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. It is your responsibility to read and understand the policy (available at http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/). 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 the professor or instructor.

Texts:
* You should obtain a copy you can bring to class, either digital or hard copy

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

**Tuesday, August 23:** Introduction to the course and expectations

**Thursday, August 25:** Reflecting on slavery and the slave trade.
*Readings:*
- “The 1619 project,” available online at: https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html

*Weekly assignment #1 due August 24 (before midnight)*

**Tuesday, August 30:** Defining slavery in a global context
*Reading:*

*Sign up in class for discussion leading*

**Thursday, September 1:** Discussion of databases
*Reading:*

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**Tuesday, August 30:** Defining slavery in a global context
*Reading:*

*Sign up in class for discussion leading*

**Thursday, September 1:** Discussion of databases
*Reading:*

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Weekly assignment #2 due August 31 (before midnight)

**Tuesday, September 6:** “Slavery”
*Reading:*
- Konadu, *Transatlantic Africa*, introduction

**Thursday, September 8:** Narratives of enslavement
*Reading:*
- Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*… excerpts (available on blackboard)
- “Ayuba Suleiman Diallo of Bondu” (available on blackboard)

Weekly assignment #3 due September 7 (before midnight)

**Tuesday, September 13:** Early history of the slave trade
*Readings:*
- “The African Coastal Origins of Slaves…” from *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (available on blackboard)

**Thursday, September 15:** Slave Trading on the African coast
*Reading:*
- Konadu, *Transatlantic Africa*, chapter 1

Weekly assignment #4 due September 14 (before midnight)

**Tuesday, September 20:** Commercial transformations in Africa
*Reading:*
- Konadu, *Transatlantic Africa*, chapter 2

**Thursday, September 22:** Cultural ramifications and debates over the Middle Passage
*Reading:*
- Konadu, *Transatlantic Africa*, chapter 3

Weekly assignment #5 due September 21 (before midnight)

**Tuesday, September 27:** Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean and Asia
*Reading:*

**Thursday, September 29:** no class
*Readings:*
- “Story of Swema” (available on blackboard)

**Weekly assignment #6 due September 28 (before midnight)**

**Tuesday, October 4:** Possibilities for *SlaveVoyages*

*Reading:*

**Thursday, October 6:** Limitations for *SlaveVoyages*

*Reading:*

*Worksheet on SlaveVoyages due October 9 (before midnight)*

**Tuesday, October 11 - Fall Break (Monday classes meet)**

**Thursday, October 13:** Capitalism

*Reading:*
- Konadu, *Transatlantic Africa*, chapter 4

**Weekly assignment #7 due October 12 (before midnight)**

**Tuesday, October 18:** Abolitionism

*Reading:*
- Konadu, *Transatlantic Africa*, chapter 5

**Thursday, October 20:** Discussion - Two Princes of Calabar

*Reading:*
- *Two Princes of Calabar*

*Short paper due October 23 (before midnight)*

**Tuesday, October 25:** Slavery in the Americas

*Reading:*
- Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning: the Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2017), chapter 7 (available through library catalog)

**Thursday, October 27:** Experience of slavery in the Americas

*Reading:*

**Weekly assignment #8 due October 26 (before midnight)**

**Tuesday, November 1:** Public history and slavery in the Americas

*Explore:*
- The Searchable Museum (explore the exhibit)

**Thursday, November 3:** Exploring the Searchable Museum

*Assignment:*
- Choose three different components of the site (ie, a video, podcast, article) and describe it briefly in your notes before class. Come prepared to present (informally) about what you found.

*Worksheet on The Searchable Museum due November 6 (before midnight)*

**Tuesday, November 8:** Bringing it all together: the Enslaved database

*Explore:*
- *Enslaved* database: [https://enslaved.org/](https://enslaved.org/)

*Read:*

**Thursday, November 10:** Discussing the Enslaved database

*Assignment:*
- Choose one portion of the site and assess its use of sources and presentation of the history.

*Worksheet on Enslaved due November 13 (before midnight)*

**Tuesday, November 15:** Choosing a database and your research question.

*Assignment:*
- Come to class with a list of several research questions (at least 3) and which database(s) will help you refine or answer this question.

**Thursday, November 17:** no class; continue work on project
Tuesday, November 22: Reviewing databases – share your review with the class!

* Worksheet on your database due before class (submitted on blackboard)

Thursday, November 24: Thanksgiving (no class)

Tuesday, November 29: Reflections on emancipation and abolition

  Reading:

Thursday, December 1: Memories and reflections

  Reading:
  - Konadu, Transatlantic Africa, chapter 6 and epilogue

Final paper due December 8 by midnight