

Fall 2004 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Wednesdays, 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

HIS 712: Slavery in the Americas Syllabus

When Americans speak about slavery now, we tend to think of the “Old South,” a mythologized world of cotton, big houses, and magnolias. Southern antebellum slavery, however, was one of the final incarnations of a system of labor that had emerged in the Atlantic almost five hundred years before and had transformed repeatedly before appearing in the Black Belt in the middle of the nineteenth century. From its introduction in the Americas onward, chattel slavery had a profound influence on the colonial societies that emerged in the wake of Columbus’s arrival. Yet, neither the impact nor the character of the institution was uniform. To understand the complexity of slavery, then, it is necessary to trace the institution’s evolution across time and space. This class examines the origins and development of slavery before and after its arrival on the North American mainland and explores the unique nature of slavery in the U. S. while placing the “peculiar institution” in a hemispheric context.

Course Requirements: Attendance is mandatory. Students are required to read each book for each week in preparation for in-class discussion. Students are also required to lead discussion, both in pairs and individually, twice during the semester. Finally, students are required to write three six- to eight-page papers, due in class on September 22, October 27, and December 1. Students who submit assignments after the deadline will be penalized with a grade deduction based on the lateness of the assignment. Participation and discussion count as 40% of a student’s grade and papers count as 20% each.

Week 1: August 18

Introduction

Week 2: August 25

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Week 3: September 1

Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Week 4: September 8

James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003)

Week 5: September 15

Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves, The Rise of the Planter Class in the British West Indies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000)

Week 6: September 22

First Paper Due

Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994)

Week 7: September 29

Anthony Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003)

Week 8: October 6

Judith Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002)

Week 9: October 13

Graham Russell Hodges, *Root and Branch: African American in New York and East Jersey* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999)

Week 10: October 20

Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995)

Week 11: October 27

Second Paper Due

Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999)

Week 12: November 3

Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000)

Week 13: November 10

Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999)

Week 14: November 17

Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (New York: Vintage, 1974)

Week 15: November 24

Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 16: December 1

Third Paper Due

Michael Johnson and James Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York: Norton, 1984)