

Fall 2007 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:00 - 11:00, and Thursdays, 10:00 to 11:00, and by appointment

## **HIS 712: Slavery in the Americas**

### **Course Syllabus**

When we refer to slavery in the United States 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 at least once during the semester. Finally, students are required to write three five- to seven-page papers (due in class on September 5, October 3, and October 24) and one ten- to twelve-page paper (due in class on December 5). Students who submit assignments after the deadline will be penalized with a grade deduction based on the lateness of the assignment.

**Readings:** In addition to the books listed below, which are required for this course, I highly recommend that each of you acquire Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (London: Verso Press, 1998).

#### **Final Grade Composition**

Participation and discussion	25%
5-7 page papers (3 x 15%)	45%
10-12 page paper	30%

#### **Unit 1**

##### **Week 1: August 22**

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

**Week 2: August 29**

Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994)

**Week 3: September 5**

Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage Through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002)

**First paper due at the beginning of class**

**Unit 2**

**Week 4: September 12**

James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003)

**Week 5: September 19**

Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: the Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972)

**Week 6: September 26**

Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974)

**Week 7: October 3**

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

**Second paper due at the beginning of class**

**Unit 3**

**Week 8: October 10**

Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, and Commoners, and the Hidden Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000)

**Week 9: October 17**

Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves, and the American Revolution* (New York: Ecco Press, 2006)

**Week 10: October 24**

Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2004)

**Third paper due at the beginning of class**

**Unit 4**

**Week 11: October 31**

Class Canceled

**Week 12: November 7**

Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005)

**Week 13: November 14**

Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

**Week 14: November 21**

Thanksgiving - Class Canceled

**Week 15: November 28**

Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005)

**Week 16: December 5**

Winthrop Jordan, *Tumult and Silence at Second Creek: An Inquiry into a Civil War Slave Conspiracy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993)

**Fourth paper due at the beginning of class**