

Fall 2012 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

## 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 one book review (due November 1) and four seven- to nine-page papers (due in class on September 13, October 4, October 25, and November 29). 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	15%
Book Review	5%
7-9 page papers (4 x 20%)	80%

### **Unit 1**

#### **Week 1: August 23**

Introduction

**Week 2: August 30**

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

**Week 3: September 6**

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

**Week 4: September 13**

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 5: September 20**

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

**Week 6: September 27**

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 7: October 4**

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

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

**Unit 3**

**Week 8: October 11**

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 18**

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

**Week 10: October 25**

Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Slaves, the British, and the American Revolution* (Harper Perennial, 2007)

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

**Unit 4**

**Week 11: November 1**

Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Harvard University Press, 2007)

**Book review due at the beginning of class**

**Week 12: November 8**

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

**Week 13: November 15**

Anthony Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007)

**Week 14: November 22**

Class Canceled – Thanksgiving

**Week 15: November 29**

Winthrop D. Jordan, *Silence and Tumult at Second Creek: An Inquiry into a Civil War Slave Conspiracy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996)

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