In this course we will explore **when**, **where**, and **why** a direct trade between European and African merchants began in the fifteenth century and turned into a trans-Atlantic trade in captive people. We will focus on this history primarily from the perspective of Olaudah Equiano, also known as Gustavas Vassa, as written by him in *The Interesting Narrative* (1789). He takes us into the Atlantic slave trade through his own experiences as a child taken captive; a slave serving on Atlantic ships who learned to speak, read, and write in English; an eye witness to the varieties of enslavement in the Atlantic basin who went on to purchase his freedom; and, in England, a promoter of abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Major themes we examine are: cross-cultural encounters and conflicts; trading in commodity currencies; ‘master narratives’ and ‘slave narratives’; history and memory; African diaspora and ‘creole’ cultures; and ‘race’ and ‘double consciousness’ in the modern Atlantic world.

Student learning goals – At the successful completion of this course, a student should be able to:

- Explain the chronological development of the Atlantic Slave Trade and its abolition;
- Review major effects of the Atlantic slave trade in the Atlantic basin;
- Discuss the importance of geography and chronology in studying historical events.

General College Historical Perspective (GHP) Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives;
2. Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.

[Based primarily on short writing assignments (8 total)) on course readings.]

General College Global Non-Western (GN) Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Find, interpret, and evaluate information on diverse cultures;
2. Describe interconnections among regions of the world (Africa and Atlantic basin);
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative perspectives to analyze issues.

[Based on a map quiz and two essays based on course readings and in-class lecture/discussions]

Course requirements as percentage of final grade:

- **10%** Beginning-of-semester map quiz based on maps in syllabus
- **15%** Midterm in-class essay based on readings and notes from class discussions
- **20%** Final in-class essay based on course readings and notes from class discussions
- **30%** 8 short writing assignments (graded as 0, 2, 4, or 6 points each, together worth 30%)
- **25%** General class participation, attendance, and group work

NO MAKE-UP TESTS; SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS NOT ACCEPTED AFTER THE
CLASS PERIOD DURING WHICH THEY ARE DUE.