

Spring 2006 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro
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Office Hours: Mondays, 12 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. and Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 11 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, both in pairs and individually, during the semester. Finally, students are required to write three five- to seven-page papers (due in class on January 30, April 10, and May 1) and one ten- to twelve-page paper (due in class on March 27). Students who submit assignments after the deadline will be penalized with a grade deduction based on the lateness of the assignment.

Final Grade Composition

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

Unit 1

Week 1: January 9

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

Week 2: January 16

MLK Day Class Canceled

Week 3: January 23

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

Week 4: January 30

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: February 6

Herman Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003)

Week 6: February 13

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

Week 7: February 20

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 8: February 27

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

Week 9: March 6

Spring Break Class Canceled

Week 10: March 13

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: March 20

Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and his Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)

Week 12: March 27

James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and the Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)

Second paper due at the beginning of class

Unit 3

Week 13: April 3

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

Week 14: April 10

Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)

Third paper due at the beginning of class

Unit 4

Week 15: April 17

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

Week 16: April 24

Edward E. Baptist, *Creating an Old South: Middle Florida's Plantation Frontier Before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002)

Week 17: May 1

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