

HIS 389-01 / IGS-333-07: West Africa during the Atlantic Slave Trade
Spring 2010 – T/Th 3:30 - 4:45, 2207 MHRA Bldg.

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Office Hours: T/W 11 - 12 noon
and by appointment
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Course Objectives:

In this course we will examine how the trade between European and African merchants that began in the fifteenth century turned into a trans-Atlantic slave trade. We will focus on this development primarily from the perspective of the West African societies that were involved in this trade, and we will be especially concerned with questions of how the slave trade was organized on the African side, and how the trade in slaves and its abolition affected West Africa. Major themes to be addressed include: cross-cultural encounters and conflicts; commodities and assortment bargaining; ‘master narratives’ and ‘slave narratives’; history and memory; diaspora and ‘creolization’; ‘double consciousness’ and the Atlantic world; and gender and demography.

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

- Explain the chronological development of the Atlantic Slave Trade and its abolition;
- Review the major effects of the Atlantic trade on West African societies and the African diaspora;
- Discuss the importance of geographical place and chronology in studying historical events.

Course requirements include: a beginning-of-semester quiz based on course reading (worth 10% of final grade); a mid-term test based on the course text (Lindsay) and an end-of-semester in-class essay based on course text (Equiano), and possible additional quizzes if deemed necessary (together worth 30% of final grade); short writing assignments (worth 40% of final grade); and general class participation, attendance, and assignments incorporated into group work (worth 20% of final grade). **SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE CLASS PERIOD DURING WHICH THEY ARE DUE.**

***** Attendance policy: Attendance at all lectures and discussions is mandatory; unexcused absences will lower the class participation/attendance portion of the final grade; students with more than two unexcused absences risk being dropped from the course; excused absences must be documented. Pagers, laptops, and cell phones must be turned off. This is not a distance learning class – I cannot respond to emails from students and I cannot accept assignments sent as email attachments. *****

Required textbooks: Lindsay, Lisa. Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade (Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008).
Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative and other Writings (Penguin Books, revised edition 2003).

Other required readings (on Blackboard) are listed in the syllabus after the class calendar.