

HIS 511C
Seminar in Historical Research and Writing
The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Spring 2011

Class: Tuesdays 3:30 pm
Classroom: Moore HRA 2208
Office hours: Thursdays, 10-12 am and by appointment

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SYNOPSIS

The transatlantic slave trade lasted for over four hundred years and was one of the largest and most disrupting movements of people in human history. This course introduces students to the broad economic, political, social, and cultural impact of the slave trade in Africa, the Americas, and Europe. In addition to learning the basic historical narrative, students will analyze a range of primary documents and evidence, and learn about some of the major historiographic debates. The major project will be production of an original research paper, based on a careful reading of a selected collection of primary sources, as well as analysis of relevant historiography. You are strongly encouraged to choose a research topic which fits in with your wider historical interests. This course carries both Writing Intensive and Speaking Intensive markers.

COURSE GOALS

In this course students will learn to:

- Identify the major narrative and historiography of the transatlantic slave trade
- Speak clearly about their research
- Locate and analyze relevant primary and secondary sources
- Develop a clear thesis statement
- Construct a coherent, persuasive argument backed up by appropriate evidence
- Research and write an original research paper based on analysis of appropriate sources

REQUIRED TEXTS

Lindsay, Lisa. *Captives as Commodities. The Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Pearson, 2008.
Northrup, David , ed., *The Atlantic Slave Trade*. 3rd Edition. Houghton Mifflin, 2010.
Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 6th edition. Bedford/ St. Martin's 2009.

These books can be purchased at the UNCG book store. They will also be on reserve at the library circulation desk. If you obtain your books elsewhere be sure to get the correct edition. There will also be articles on e-reserve (accessible via the course Blackboard site) and books on reserve in the library.

OVERVIEW OF CLASS MEETINGS AND MAJOR DUE DATES

NOTE: *You will get a detailed description of weekly readings and assignments at the beginning of each unit.*

Unit I: Getting Started

Week 1 (Tuesday, January 11): Introduction and Overview

Week 2 (Tuesday, January 18): Selecting a Topic

Week 3 (Tuesday, January 25): Identifying and Evaluating Primary Sources

- One to two-page description of possible paper topic(s) due

Week 4 (Tuesday, February 1): Finding Secondary Sources and Compiling Bibliographies

- Description of major primary source(s) due

Week 5 (Tuesday, February 8): Developing Theses and Arguments

- Draft bibliography due

Unit II: Getting it Down

Week 6 (Tuesday, February 15): Effective Research Strategies

- Draft abstract and annotated bibliography due

Week 7 (Tuesday, February 22): Conferences, Research, and Blackboard Discussion

Week 8 (Tuesday, March 1): Conferences, Research, and Blackboard Discussion

******* Spring Break: March 8 *******

Week 9 (Tuesday, March 15): Conferences, Research, and Blackboard Discussion

Unit III: Fixing it Up

Week 10 (Tuesday, March 22): Moving Beyond the “Shitty First Draft”

- Rough draft of paper due (2 hard copies)

Week 11 (Tuesday, March 29): The “Updraft”

- Written evaluation of peer’s paper due

Week 12 (Tuesday, April 5): Individual meetings and Blackboard Discussion

Week 13 (Tuesday, April 12): Presentations and Evaluation

Week 14 (Tuesday, April 19): Presentations and Evaluations; Conclusions

Tuesday, April 26: NO CLASS (UNCG follows Friday schedule)

- Final paper due

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, AND GRADING

Research Paper (70%)

The major project for this class is production of an original research paper which analyzes primary sources and engages with the relevant historiography. Together, assignments related to the research paper are worth 70% of the final grade, as follows:

Pre-paper assignments (abstract, bibliography, etc.): 20%

Draft paper: 20%

Revised final paper: 30%

You will receive detailed information about the requirements for each of these assignments.

Short Assignments (15%)

To successfully develop and complete your research you must learn the basic narrative of the transatlantic slave trade, become familiar with major historiographic debates, and learn how to analyze primary documents. Short written assignments aimed at developing these skills will include in-class exercises, response papers, and Blackboard postings related to a selection of primary and secondary material. You will receive information about specific readings and assignments at the beginning of each unit.

Discussion and Presentations (15%)

This includes in-class group work, active participation in class discussions, group presentations, and presentation of the final paper.

Grading Scale

A+: 97-100, A: 93-96, A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89; B: 83-86, B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72

D+: 67-69, D: 63-66, D-: 60-62

F: 0-59

POLICIES

Timely Completion of Assignments

Conceptualizing, researching, and writing an original research paper is a major undertaking which must be done in a series of consecutive steps. It will be very difficult for you to catch up if you get behind; your grade will suffer and you may fail the course. You must successfully complete each assignment to pass this course, including making substantial revisions on your draft paper.

Deposit a copy of all written assignments in the Electronic Dropbox of the course Blackboard site, as well as bringing a hard copy to class. If an emergency prevents you from coming to class you can still meet the deadline with an electronic submission.

Academic Integrity

Enrollment in this course and submission of each written assignment constitute students' acceptance of UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy. You can find a copy of the full policy at: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense which can result in failing the class or expulsion from the university. Know the rules.

Attendance and Class Etiquette

Students are expected to attend and be attentive in class, to have read and thought about the material, and to participate actively in discussions. Get to know your fellow students so you can get copies of class notes and assignments if you have to miss class due to illness or emergency. Missing two or more class meetings will seriously imperil your ability to pass this course.

A classroom is a communal space where we gather together to pursue a common goal. We will not be using laptop computers, cell phones, or other electronic devices. Please do not bring food to class unless you have enough to share with everyone. You may bring an individual drink. Repeatedly arriving late, leaving early, leaving the room during class, and sleeping (or appearing to sleep) are disrespectful and disruptive—they will be counted as absences unless you have discussed extenuating circumstances with the professor.

Communication

We will communicate regularly in this course via the Blackboard site and our UNCG e-mail accounts. Check both regularly. The best way to communicate with the professor is via e-mail (lmrupert@uncg.edu). You should expect to hear back within 24 hours, unless: 1) it is the weekend; 2) you receive an automatic “out of office” reply. It is your responsibility to make sure that the communication is successful and that all material gets to me on time.

Check the Announcements and Course Documents sections of Blackboard regularly—look here for copies of the syllabus, assignments and other course documents. You can access all articles via the e-reserves link on Blackboard. We will also be using the Blackboard Discussion Board.

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Dean of Students (<http://deanofstudents.uncg.edu/>; tel: 45514): Supports and advocates for students in crisis.

Office of Information Technology (<http://www.its.uncg.edu>, tel: 6-TECH): Your source for all tech problems and computer malfunctions. Please note that computer or printer problems are not a valid excuse for turning in an assignment late.

Office of Disability Services (<http://ods.dept.uncg.edu/>; tel: 45440): Students who have documented disabilities that require special consideration and/or accommodation should register with this office and bring the required paperwork to the professor during the first days of class so we can make the necessary adjustments. No accommodations can be made without this paperwork.

University Writing Center (www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/; tel: 43125): An excellent place to get help with paper structure, grammar, style, etc.