

**HIS 511C**  
**Seminar in Historical Research and Writing**  
**The Transatlantic Slave Trade**  
**Spring 2012**

Class: Wednesdays 3:30-6:20 pm

Classroom: Moore HRA 3207

Office hours: Thursdays 10-12 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 selection 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 and articulately 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.

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 6th edition. Bedford/ St. Martin's 2009.

Both books can be purchased at the UNCG book store or from a variety of online sellers. All are also on reserve at the library circulation desk. There will also be articles and other handouts (either on e-reserve or handed out in class) and additional books on reserve at the library circulation desk. Always bring a copy of the week's readings to class.

## **ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, AND GRADING**

### **Research Paper (70%)**

The major project for this class is production of an original research paper which analyzes primary sources, situates the material in the appropriate historical context, 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: 20%*

*Draft paper: 20%*

*Revised final paper: 30%*

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

### **Short Writing Assignments (15%)**

To successfully develop and complete your research you must learn how to analyze primary documents, learn the basic narrative of the transatlantic slave trade, become familiar with major historiography debates, and develop your own critical analysis. 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.

### **Attendance, Discussion and Presentations (15%)**

This includes in-class group work, active participation in class discussions, group presentations, and individual presentation of the research project.

### **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 small, 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. ***To pass this course, you must successfully complete, in a timely manner, all the preparatory assignments leading up to the final paper, including submitting a complete draft. Your final paper must show significant reworking of the draft, based on the professor's comments.***

Submit an electronic copy of all written assignments in the course Blackboard site, and also bring a hard copy to class. If an emergency or illness prevents you from coming to class you can still meet the deadline with an electronic submission, and deliver the hard copy ASAP.

### **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. Don't be afraid to ask.

## **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. Please do not use 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 and Meetings**

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](mailto: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. We will also be using the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Individual meetings are a vital component of this course. It is your responsibility to remember meetings you have scheduled, and to be punctual in your attendance. If you must cancel, do so in a timely manner, and reschedule promptly.

## **IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

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

***Office of Information Technology*** (<http://www.its.uncg.edu>, tel: 6-TECH): Your source for all tech problems, Blackboard issues, 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*** (<http://www.uncg.edu/eng/writingcenter/>; tel: 43125): An excellent place to get help with paper structure, grammar, style, etc.

***University Speaking Center*** (<http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu>): The place to go for help with all oral presentations, whether individual or group.

## **OVERVIEW OF CLASS SCHEDULE AND MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS**

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

### **Unit 1: Getting Started**

*The goals for this unit are as follows:*

- Learn the basic narrative of the transatlantic slave trade
- Develop proficiency in critically interrogating primary documents
- Grasp the stages involved in researching and writing a research paper
- Identify some of the basic historiographic debates
- Identify an interesting and manageable research project, including topic and possible (primary and secondary) sources

Weekly readings will be in Lindsey, Northrup, and Rampolla, as well as additional handouts. There will be weekly short writing assignments (2-3 pages each).

### **Unit II: Getting it Down**

*The goals for this unit are as follows:*

- Identify one or more appropriate primary sources on which to base a research paper
- Develop a research question related to the material
- Identify a suitable corpus of secondary literature related to the paper topic (including both narrative and historiographic debate)
- Produce a complete draft research paper

There will be a combination of regular class sessions, individual and small group meetings with the professor, and individualized research time.

**There is no class on Wednesday, March 7 (spring break)**

Reading and writing assignments will include both common material and that which is specific to each person's project.

**Weekly writing assignments** will include a paper abstract, bibliography, and individual engagement with the appropriate primary and secondary material relevant to the student's specific project, as well as regular postings to the course Blackboard site.

\*\*\*\*\* **The draft research paper is due on Wednesday, March 14.** \*\*\*\*\*

### **Unit III: Fixing it Up**

*The primary goal for this unit is to produce the final research paper, which will be a major rewrite of the draft paper, and will incorporate a balance of the following three elements:*

- original analysis of primary material
- historical narrative
- critical engagement with one or more relevant historiographic debates

There will be a combination of regular class sessions, individual and small group meetings with the professor, and individualized research time. Students will also post regularly to Blackboard.

\*\*\*\*\* **The final paper is due on Monday, April 23.** \*\*\*\*\*