

## HIS 511C: Seminar in Historical Research and Writing The Transatlantic Slave Trade (Spring 2018)

Tuesdays 3:30-6:20 pm, MHRA 1209

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Office hours: Thursdays 1-3 pm and by appointment (MHRA 2105)

### 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. Students will learn the basic historical narrative; analyze a range of primary documents and evidence; and explore 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, and analysis of relevant historiography.

### STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this course students will:

- Master the basic narrative of the transatlantic slave trade
- Develop their abilities to speak clearly and articulately about their research
- Learn to locate and analyze relevant primary and secondary sources
- Construct a clear, 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*. Bedford/ St. Martin's. Various editions.

Both books can be purchased at the UNCG book store or from a variety of online sellers. They are also on reserve at the library circulation desk.

### ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The major project for this class is production of an original research paper, 15-20 pages in length, which closely analyzes an appropriate selection of primary sources; situates this material in historical context; and engages with the relevant historiography. While conceptualizing, researching, and writing an original research paper can seem overwhelming, it is also deeply satisfying—and it's what historians do!

You will build the paper over the course of the semester, in a series of carefully scaffolded assignments. If you complete each step on time, and follow the specifications, you should have no problem passing this course. However, it will be very difficult for you to catch up if you miss more than one or two classes, or you get behind in the assignments: your grade will suffer, and you may fail the course. ***To pass this course, you must successfully complete, on schedule, all the assignments, including submitting a complete draft and writing a final paper that show significant reworking of the draft, based on the professor's comments.***

**Short Writing Assignments** (together worth 15% of final grade)

**Draft research paper and final research paper** (each worth 35% of final grade)

**Attendance, discussion and presentations** (together worth 15% of final grade)

Upload an electronic copy of all written assignments to the course Canvas site, and bring an identical 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 then deliver the hard copy ASAP.

**Grading Scale:** A+: 97-100, A: 93-96, A-: 90-92  
C+: 77-79, C: 73-76, C-: 70-72

B+: 87-89; B: 83-86, B-: 80-82  
D+: 67-69, D: 63-66, D-: 60-62 F: 0-59

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **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 must miss class due to illness or emergency. Missing more than two classes 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 except as necessary for class work; 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 Canvas 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.

Individual meetings are a vital component of this course. It is your responsibility to attend meetings you have scheduled and to be punctual. If you must cancel, do so in a timely manner, and reschedule promptly. Repeatedly missing meetings, coming unprepared, or arriving late, will affect your grade.

## **IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY RESOURCES**

**History Department** ([his.uncg.edu/](http://his.uncg.edu/); [www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/](http://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/))

Keep up with your professors and fellow history majors!

**Dean of Students** ([sa.uncg.edu/dean/support/](http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/support/)): Supports and advocates for students in crisis, including those with family emergencies, extended illness, trauma, etc.

**Office of Accessibility Resources and Services** ([ods.uncg.edu/](http://ods.uncg.edu/)): Students who have documented disabilities that require accommodation should register with OARS and bring in the required paperwork during the first week of class. No accommodations can be made without the appropriate paperwork from OARS.

**Information Technology Services** ([its.uncg.edu/](http://its.uncg.edu/)): Your source for all tech problems, including computer malfunctions, issues with Canvas, etc. The professor cannot help you with these!

**University Writing Center** ([writingcenter.uncg.edu/](http://writingcenter.uncg.edu/)): Provides help with paper structure, argument, grammar, style, etc.

**University Speaking Center** ([speakingcenter.uncg.edu](http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/)): Provides help for all oral presentations, to both individuals and groups.

## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

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

### **Unit 1: Getting Started (Weeks 1-5; January 9-February 6)**

*The goals and tasks for this unit are as follows:*

- Learn the basic narrative of the transatlantic slave trade
- Develop proficiency in critically interrogating primary documents
- Develop fluency in historical writing
- Grasp the stages involved in researching and writing a research paper
- Identify appropriate primary source(s) on which to base a research paper
- Complete short weekly writing assignments (2-3 pages each)

We will have weekly class meetings throughout this unit, with readings in Lindsey and Rampolla, as well as handouts and electronic resources.

*Short weekly writing assignments* (2-3 pages) will help students prepare for the larger research paper.

### **Unit II: Getting it Down (weeks 6-10; February 13- March 20)**

*The tasks for this unit are:*

- Closely analyze the primary source(s) selected
- Develop a suitable research question related to the material
- Identify an appropriate corpus of secondary literature related to the paper topic, including both narrative and historiographic debate
- Produce a 10-15 page draft research paper, contextualizing the selected primary source(s) in a wider narrative and (possibly) identifying larger historiographic “so-what” questions

There will be a combination of regular class sessions; individual and small group meetings with the professor; and individualized research time. Reading assignments will include both common material and books and articles that are specific to each person’s project.

*Weekly writing assignments* will include deep analysis of the primary document(s) selected; paper abstract (draft and revisions); short annotated bibliography; the development of an appropriate narrative based on secondary material relevant to the student’s specific project; and the draft research paper.

**\*\*\*\*\* Draft paper due on Tuesday, March 20 \*\*\*\*\***

### **Unit III: Fixing it Up (weeks 11-15; March 27-April 24)**

*The primary task for this unit is to produce the final research paper, which will be a rewrite of the draft paper. It should address all the professor’s comments on the draft and incorporate a balance of the following three elements:*

- original analysis of primary material
- historical narrative to provide full context
- 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.

**\*\*\*\*\* Final, revised paper due on Tuesday, April 24 \*\*\*\*\***