

HIS 389-01: West Africa during the Atlantic Slave Trade
Spring 2023 – Asynchronous Online Guided Learning

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Do not email me through Canvas

Course Objectives:

In this course we will analyze and explore the direct trade between European and African merchants that began in the fifteenth century and gradually became the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. We will approach and learn about two important and inter-related aspects of this history. **Part I** of the course we will be viewing the trans-Atlantic slave trade as a new, inter-continental global economic system and how it operated. Then, in **Part II**, we will view the trans-Atlantic slave trade in human and social terms, to understand how and why people were drawn into it and what some of its lasting effects remain and are still felt today.

The course includes a variety of required readings and film viewings, including maps, charts, articles by historians, primary sources from the time, oral histories, documentary films, and selected chapters from Olaudah Equiano's indispensable first-person account, *The Interesting Narrative* (1789). Equiano takes us into the Atlantic slave trade through his own experiences as a child taken captive; a slave serving on Atlantic ships who learned to speak, read, and write in English; an eyewitness to the varieties of enslavement in the Atlantic basin who went on to purchase his freedom; and, in England, an early promoter of abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Major themes we will examine include: cross-cultural global trade; commercial agriculture and plantation slavery; legal regulation of slaves and slavery; 'master narratives' and 'slave narratives'; history and memory; African diaspora and 'creole' cultures; and 'race' and 'double consciousness' as legacies of Atlantic slavery in the modern world.

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

- Explain the **geographical structure** and **inter-continental system** of the **Atlantic slave trade over time**;
- Review major **social, economic, and cultural effects** of the Atlantic slave trade in the entire **Atlantic basin**;
- Discuss the **importance of geography and chronology in studying historical events**.

General College Historical Perspective (GHP) Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize **primary and secondary sources** representing **divergent perspectives**;
2. Use **evidence** to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.

[Based primarily on short writing assignments (13 total) on course readings and films]

General College Global Non-Western (GN) Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Find, interpret, and evaluate information on **diverse cultures**;
2. Describe **interconnections** among regions of the world (Africa and Atlantic basin);
3. Use diverse cultural frames of reference and alternative **perspectives to analyze** issues.

[Based on midterm and final essays, covering course readings and my written introductions]

Course requirements as percentage of final grade:

- 10% Care and attention to following instructions
- 20% Midterm essay based on course readings/films and introductory announcements
- 30% Final essay based on ALL course readings/films and my introductory announcements
- 40% 13 short writing assignments (weekly)

Course work is graded according to the following criteria:

1. Level of success in identifying the question, problem, or issue at hand.
2. Level of success in presenting sufficient evidence, analysis, or information to address the particular assignment.
3. Level of success in clearly explaining insights, thoughts, and ideas to the reader.

For 'levels of success' see the **UNCG Critical Thinking Rubric** included in this syllabus.

Grading will not be done through the Canvas 'point' system. Each short writing assignment will be assessed in its Canvas comment window as fair, good, very good, and will be assigned numerical values at the end of the semester. The midterm essay and final essay will each be given a letter grade (with the possible addition of + or -) of A (excellent), B (very good), C (average), D (below average), or F (failure to minimally meet the criteria), which will be converted to the numerical scores on the UNCG grading scale.

Be aware that the weekly short writing assignments will be posted by me as **Announcements** and **Assignments** over Canvas on Tuesdays, with a due date on the following Tuesday. This schedule is to allow flexibility for students to turn in their work according to their schedule – later in the week or earlier, if that is preferable. In other words, **the 'due' date is simply the last day you can turn in your assignment**. Also be aware that students who simply wait until the last day to start and finish their assignment often turn in work that is rushed, hard to follow, and poor in quality. Note that the Midterm and Final review essays are given shorter time periods.

Always prepare for your short writing assignments by taking notes while you are doing the reading or watching the film. Having the syllabus and schedule handy is also strongly advised, either printed out or written out in a calendar. I also strongly advise you to purchase a spiral notebook devoted to the course so you can keep your notes together in good order for writing assignments and for preparing your midterm and final course essays. **Studies have established that writing out notes in longhand greatly helps learning and retaining what you have learned**. This is NOT the case with recording lectures or typing notes into a computer.

THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP ESSAYS ALLOWED; SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE TIME AND DATE IT IS DUE UNLESS YOU PROVIDE ME WITH A DOCUMENTED EXCUSE.

****WARNING** about course withdrawals** –UNC General Administration policy now limits you to 16 credits of withdrawals over the **entire course of your degree**. This semester the last day to withdraw from a course without receiving a WF is Friday, March 3.

All assignments must be your own work, in your own words, and in complete sentences.