

# SYLLABUS

HIST 600-02

Fall 2020

## Seminar in History: Africans, Slavery, and the Atlantic World



<https://newsroom.spotify.com/2019-01-10/the-rhythm-of-the-african-diaspora-plays-everywhere-including-our-afro-hub/>

**Tuesdays 12:30-3:10**

Holton 341

Prof. Rebecca Shumway

Email: [shumwayr@uwm.edu](mailto:shumwayr@uwm.edu)

Office: Holton Hall 345

Office Hours: TBD

### **Course Description:**

This course examines the making and transformations of the Atlantic World through the interaction of Africans, Europeans and the people of the Americas and Caribbean, c. 1450-1850, with an emphasis on African experiences both in Africa and the African Diaspora. Students will write a research paper (25 pages) that explores a particular aspect of this topic. Some of the questions we will consider include the following: How did the opening of maritime Atlantic trade relations affect life in Africa? How did Africans shape the development of the Atlantic World? We will explore political transformations, cultural syncretism and African agency within African societies and throughout the African Diaspora.

### **Goals:**

This undergraduate seminar is designed to give History majors experience conducting in-depth study of a particular theme or period in history. After reading and discussing some general works in Atlantic history, students will design and write a research paper on a particular topic of their own choosing. The paper must draw upon primary and secondary sources and situate its topic within the context of the Atlantic World, c. 1450-1850.

### **Books to Buy:**

- *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World*, by John K. Thornton
- *Captives as Commodities: The Transatlantic Slave Trade*, by Lisa A. Lindsay

**Additional Readings:** Readings that are not contained in these books will be available in electronic format on Canvas.

**Requirements and Grading:**

- Response Papers 10%
- Bibliography 10%
- Proposal 10%
- First Draft 10%
- Presentation 10%
- Term paper 30%
- Participation 20%

**Short Response Papers (10%):** In the first weeks of the semester, you will submit four essays on the readings assigned for the course. You will need to demonstrate a command of the material and an ability to identify the central thesis and supporting arguments. This will also provide an opportunity to assess any issues with formal writing that may impede your ability to successfully complete your final project. Essays should be 3-4 pages, double spaced, in Times New Roman font. Due dates:

**Bibliography (10%):** To prepare for your research project, you must submit an annotated bibliography that contains both primary and secondary sources for your paper. Due date:

**Proposal (10%):** You must submit a research proposal prior to writing your research paper. The proposal will include a discussion of your subject, a thesis, supporting arguments, paper outline and discussion of your sources. In the proposal you will also include a modified (where appropriate) bibliography. Proposals should be 4-5 pages. Due date:

**First Draft (10%):** You must prepare a first draft of your term paper and bring two copies to class, one for peer review and one to turn in. The first draft should cover all major areas of your research and analysis and be at least 15 pages in length (excluding bibliography). Due date:

**Presentation (10%):** Each student will give an oral presentation of her/his paper, speaking for 15 minutes, during the final two weeks of class. This will be an opportunity for additional peer review and feedback.

**Term Paper (30%):** The bulk of this class shall prepare you for writing a formal research paper of 25-30 pages that includes both primary and secondary sources. You are expected to write clearly and effectively. A thesis must be included, and your primary and secondary sources must support your argument. You will meet with me to discuss drafts and also in peer reviews with your fellow classmates. Due date:

**Participations (20%):** Consistent and thoughtful participation in class meetings will determine a part of your final grade. Participation opportunities may involve open discussions of the readings, group activities, or note taking. Since the class meets less often than a regular class, absences can greatly affect your final grade.

**Choosing a topic:** Your final paper must examine a historical subject that is part of the broad topic of the Atlantic World and Africa. The time period must fall between the dates 1450 and 1850. Your paper must investigate (ask questions about / explain or analyze) a specific state or society in Africa or a society in the Americas with a large population of African-descended people. After you think of something that interests you, it will be important to limit your topic, with my assistance. In order to ensure that your paper does a meaningful analysis of a focused argument, you will need to choose an issue for which there are available primary sources, and something that you can study in depth and write about within the timespan of the semester. We

will meet to discuss how to limit and focus your topic during individual meetings throughout the semester.

**Grading Scale:** A=100-94; A-=93-90; B+=89-87; B=86-84; B-=83-80; C+=79-77; C=76-74; C-=73-70; D+=69-67; D=66-64; D-=63-60; F=59-0

**Note:** Please bring your syllabus and copies of the assigned reading to class every day.