

# SYLLABUS

Africa Roots of American Cultures

HIST 840-202

Spring 2021

Wednesdays 3:00-5:40 PM

Online Synchronous (Microsoft Teams)

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## Course Description

This seminar explores the historical background of African societies from which millions of people were forcibly relocated to the Americas during the trans-Atlantic slave trade with a view to better understanding elements of African cultural features in societies of the western hemisphere. We will critically review some of the theoretical frameworks that scholars have used to assess this historical phenomenon and seek to locate African history in an Atlantic World context.

## Assignments

1. **Discussion:** Students should come to each class having completed the assigned reading and should be prepared with at least three comments or queries for discussion. In addition, one student will be assigned to introduce the readings and get the discussion going each week.

2. **Weekly short papers:** Students must submit a short paper (3 pages) on the reading for each of ten weeks (students choose which weeks to submit these papers). These short papers should analyze the reading assignment for that week in terms of at least one of the following:
  - a. How the book/reading expands knowledge of African and Diasporan history
  - b. How the book/reading demonstrates useful research methodology
  - c. How the book/reading will be directly useful for your PhD thesis.
3. **Final paper:** Each student will write a final paper (8-10 pages) analyzing the material covered in this course in the form of an historiographical essay. (Further instructions to be announced.) Due May 15.

## Grading

Short papers	40%
Oral participation:	40%
Final paper	20%

## Books to Buy

- 1) Keim, Curtis. *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*. (1999)
- 2) Curtin, Philip. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (1990)
- 3) Afigbo, A. E., Carolyn A. Brown, and Paul E. Lovejoy. *Repercussions of the Atlantic slave trade: the interior of the Bight of the Biafra and the African diaspora* (2011)
- 4) Heywood, Linda M. *Njinga of Angola* (2019)
- 5) Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007)
- 6) Gomez, Michael. *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (1998)
- 7) Sweet, James. *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World* (1999)

## Weekly Topics and Readings

### 1. Introduction (January 27)

### 2. Historical Africa (February 3)

Keim, Curtis. *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*. (1999)

Miller, Joseph C. "History and Africa/Africa and History." *American Historical Review*, (1999) 1-32.

### 3. The Plantation Complex (February 10)

Curtin, Philip. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (1990)

### 4. Upper Guinea (February 17)

Rodney, Walter. "Upper Guinea and the Significance of Origins of Africans Enslaved in the New World," *Journal of Negro History* (1969)

Hawthorne, Walter. "Nourishing a Stateless Society during the Slave Trade: The Rise of Balanta Paddy-Rice Production in Guinea-Bissau," *Journal of African History* (2001)

Fields-Black, Edda. "Rice and Rice Farmers in the Upper Guinea Coast and Environmental History" in *Rice : Global Networks and New Histories* (2015)

### 5. The Gold Coast (February 24)

McCaskie, Tom. "Denkyira in the Making of Asante c. 1660-1720," *Journal of African History* (2007)

Shumway, Rebecca. *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (2011), pp. 53-87

Arhin, Kwame. "The Financing of the Ashanti Expansion (1700-1820)," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* (1967)

### 6. The Bight of Biafra (March 3)

Afigbo, A. E., Carolyn A. Brown, and Paul E. Lovejoy. *Repercussions of the Atlantic slave trade: the interior of the Bight of the Biafra and the African diaspora* (2011)

**7. West-Central Africa (March 10)**

Heywood, Linda M. *Njinga of Angola* (2019)

**8. SPRING BREAK (March 17)**

**9. The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database (March 24)**

(Assignment to be explained in class)

**10. Remembering the Slave Trade (March 31)**

Hartman, Saidiya. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007)

**11. Africans in North America (April 7)**

Gomez, Michael. *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (1998)

**12. Africans in Brazil (April 14)**

Sweet, James. *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World* (1999)

**13. Abolition Era (April 21)**

Peterson, Derek R. *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic* (2010), Introduction

Thornton, John K. "African Political Ethics and the Slave Trade" in *Abolitionism and Imperialism* (2010)

Miers and Roberts, eds., *The End of Slavery in Africa* (1988), Introduction

**14. Work on final paper (April 28)**

**15. Review (May 5)**

16. **Final Papers Due (May 15)**