

University of Pittsburgh  
 Department of History  
 History 2727  
 Africa and the Atlantic  
 Tuesday, 1:00-3:25  
 3516 Posvar Hall  
 Spring semester, 2008

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 Office hours:  
 T: 11-12:00  
 & by appointment

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 T: 11-12,Th 11-1  
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This course explores the place of Africa in Atlantic history, focusing on the nature of West African societies, the slave trade, and the transit of peoples, cultures, and modes of resistance to the Americas. We will study the main frameworks of interpretation of African, diasporic, and African-American history, ranging from the world-system analysis of Immanuel Wallerstein, to the global historical anthropology of Eric Wolf, to the Marxist dependency theory of Walter Rodney, to the cultural/intellectual history of the Black Atlantic of Paul Gilroy, to the substantial literature built up by Africanist historians.

Each student will write a weekly two-page paper reflecting on the assigned reading. These will be collected and disseminated by e-mail to all students, who will read them before the weekly class meeting. (Papers will be due on Monday at noon, before class on Tuesday.) Each student will also take responsibility for introducing one week's reading, setting it in context and outlining its scholarly reception for the class as a whole. There will be no final exam, no final paper. It is expected that every student will give maximum effort to the class and contribute to it (in writing and in discussion) in utterly serious and conscientious ways.

The following books are available at the University of Pittsburgh Bookstore:

Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008) – available in February.

Sylviane A. Diouf, ed., *Fighting the Slave Trade: West African Strategies* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003).

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Michael Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas: Restoring the Links* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

Robin Law, *Ouidah: The Social History of a West African Slaving Port, 1727-1892* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004).

Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, revised edition, 2000).

Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade 1730-1830* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking, 2007). (Note: Do not buy this book as it will be made available for purchase at cost.)

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press, 1972).

James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, second edition, 1998).

Copies of the readings are on reserve in Hillman Library.

Assignments:

#### I: FRAMEWORKS (three weeks)

Week one, 1/15/08 -- Discussion leader: Niklas Frykman

\*Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004).

\*Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), chapters 1, 3, 7, and Afterword (pages 3-23, 73-100, 195-231, and 385-391).

\*Patrick Manning, "Survival, 1600-1850," in *The African Diaspora: A History through Culture*.

Week two, 1/22/08 – Discussion leader: Isaac Curtin

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

Week three, 1/29/08 – Discussion leaders: Pete Kotowski and Valquiria Pereira Tenorio

John Thornton, *Africa and Africans*

#### II. AFRICA (Five weeks)

Week four, 2/5/08 – Discussion leader: Charlie Alessi

\*Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery*

\**Idem*, "The Impact of the Atlantic Slave Trade on Africa: A Review of the Literature," *Journal of African History* 30 (1989), 365-394.

\**Idem*, "Slavery, the Bilad al-Sudan and the Frontiers of the African Diaspora," in Lovejoy, ed., *Slavery on the Frontiers of Islam* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2004), 1-30.

Week five, 2/12/08 – Discussion leader: Colter Harper  
James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce*

Week six, 2/19/08 – Discussion leaders: Catherine Ballériaux and Katie Phelps  
Robin Law, *Ouidah*

Week seven, 2/26/08 – Discussion leader: Jake Pollock  
Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death*

Week eight, 3/4/08 – Discussion leader: Ryan Durkopp  
Sylviane Diouf, ed., *Fighting the Slave Trade*

### III. AMERICAS (Five weeks)

Week nine, 3/18/08 – Discussion leader: Titas Chakraborty  
Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship*

Week ten, 3/25/08 – Discussion leader: Julien Comte  
Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*

Week eleven, 4/1/08 – Discussion leader: Mark Kramer  
Michael Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks*

Week twelve, 4/8/08 – Discussion leader: Jamie Holeman  
Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas*

### IV. REFLECTIONS ON AFRICA AND THE ATLANTIC

Week thirteen, 4/15/08 – Discussion leader: Kavin Paulraj  
Student evaluation of course – first 20 minutes of class time

\*Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*

\*Joan Dayan, "Paul Gilroy's Slaves, Ships, and Routes: The Middle Passage as Metaphor," *Research in African Literatures* 27(1996), 7-14.

Available online at: <http://www.iupress.indiana.edu/journals/ral/ral27-4.html>