

HIST 116: Special Themes in African History – Atlantic Africa in the Era of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

[Course Dates]
[Lecture Times]
[Lecture Room]

Instructor: TBD
Contact: TBD
Office Hours: TBD
Office: TBD

Course Details (taken from the Course Catalog):

116. African History: Special Themes (4): Lecture—3 hours; term paper. Prerequisite: course 15 recommended. Themes of African history, such as African states and empires, slave trade, relationship of Egypt to rest of Africa, Bantu origins and migrations, and French policy of Assimilation and Association. Offered in alternate years. GE credit: ArtHum or SocSci | AH or SS, WC, WE.

Course Description:

Between the first decade of the sixteenth century and the third quarter of the nineteenth century, roughly 12.5 million Africans were forcibly shipped to the Western Hemisphere by the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Today, most people are at least vaguely aware of how this process shaped the complicated history of the Americas. But what about the history of Africa itself? How did the rise of this violent and unprecedented trade in human bodies shape the history of Africans and Africa? For example, how did the development of the Transatlantic Slave Trade influence structures of political authority in different regions? How did it disrupt and transform previous commercial networks and social relations? How did Africans deal with the trauma that the Transatlantic Slave Trade brought to their communities? How did the trade affect the spread of specific African cultural traditions? What were the various economic benefits and costs of this commerce to specific African societies? What were the class, gender, family, and ethnic dimensions of the trade, and how were these shaped by the time and place in which the trade occurred? Last, what did “abolishing” the Transatlantic Slave Trade mean in practice for Africans and Africa, what are the legacies of the trade today, and how do people remember the history of the trade in popular culture?

This class is designed to address the above questions. It is an upper-division lecture course on the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in “Atlantic Africa.” The course pays particular attention to some major economic, social, political, and cultural changes. The course uses a broad definition of “Atlantic Africa” as a geographic region. It encompasses the two regions that are generally known to scholars of Africa as “West Africa” and “West-Central Africa.” From time to time, the course lectures and readings may also make comparisons to South, East, or North Africa. During the course, we will study the history of regions in Atlantic Africa as they were known to writers of the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. However, we will also be conscious of the contemporary political boundaries that occupy these regions today, and of the fact that many Africans do not identify with historical terms from the era of the trade.

This course is structured chronologically and regionally. The first week is designed to introduce students to the social and political geography of Atlantic Africa, as well as some of the major questions in scholarship on Atlantic Africa. The second week provides a case study on an Atlantic African kingdom before

NB: This syllabus was designed by [Devin Leigh](#), a PhD History student at the University of California, Davis

the rise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The third week does the same for an Atlantic African kingdom during the first two centuries of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The next five weeks (weeks 4-8) are case studies from specific regions of Atlantic Africa during the height of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Week 9 focuses on Africans in the Diaspora to the Americas; week 10 focuses on the implications that the first abolitionist laws in the Western Hemisphere had for Africans and Africa; lastly, week 11 focuses on how the African side of the Transatlantic Slave Trade is remembered today. Please consult the course calendar at the end of this syllabus for a more-detailed breakdown of each week's topic and readings.

In terms of structure, this class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Tuesdays, the professor will lecture about the week's topic. On Thursdays, students will have a reading quiz followed by a class discussion. For discussion, students are required to read both the secondary and primary sources for each week. Sometimes discussion will take place in small groups; other times it will take place as a whole class.

Student Learning Outcomes:

During this course, each student will:

1. Compare and contrast the economic, social, political, and cultural contributions and experiences of a variety of people who inhabited Atlantic Africa from the 1400s through the 1700s.
2. Recognize the major economic, social, cultural, and political events and trends that have shaped the history of Atlantic Africa during the development of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
3. Analyze primary-source material for information about a particular historical issue or question.

Required Texts: *Please note:* Additional weekly readings will be posted on Canvas in PDF form.

Linda M. Heywood, *Njinga of Angola: Africa's Warrior Queen*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017. Pp. 320. ISBN: 9780674971820.

Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. Rochester: The University of Rochester Press, 2011. Pp. xii, 244. ISBN: 978-1-58046-391-1.

John Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. 238. ISBN: 9780521596497.

Recommended Text: *Please note:* This book will reinforce and overlap with the lecture material.

David Northrup, *Africa's Discovery of Europe*, 3rd ed. preferred. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xiii, 224. ISBN: 9780199941216.

Grading and Assignments:

- **Geography Test** (10%) – There will be one (1) geography test before discussion on week four.
- **Class Participation** (10%) – This grade is based off of your participation in weekly discussions.
- **Reading Quizzes** (30%) – There will be nine (9) reading quizzes, taken weekly before discussion.
- **Paper** (25%) – There will be one (1) analytical paper (9-12 pages or 2,400-3,000 words).
- **Final** (25%) – There will be one (1) final exam. It will take place on December 14.

Descriptions of the Grading Components:

Geography Test: In order to begin discussing Africa and Africans before our modern era, we must first get a better sense for what Atlantic Africa looked like to people from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries. To do this, you will be required to learn the locations of major regions and societies of Atlantic Africa and place them on a contemporary political map of the African continent. We will cover most of these locations in the first lecture of the class and a complete map will be uploaded for your convenience on Canvas. You will be expected to study this map and be able to reproduce its contents during a geography test before discussion on week four. You will not be able to use any materials during the test.

Participation: Participation is determined at the end of the quarter. It is based off your participation in weekly discussions that take place on Thursdays. In order to receive a good participation grade, students should be attending discussion each week having completed the assigned readings, taken detailed notes, and done whatever is necessary to prepare themselves to discuss the material with their classmates.

Reading Quizzes: Every Thursday meeting will begin with a 15-minute quiz about that week's readings. The only exceptions are the first week of class and the week of the geography test (week 4). The purpose of these quizzes is to make sure that students are prepared for class discussion and to provide an opportunity for students to formulate their thoughts beforehand. The quizzes have only three possible grades: 10, 5, and 0. They are designed to be easy for those students who have done the reading. Please note, the professor will drop each student's lowest quiz score at the end of the quarter.

The Paper: You will write one analytical paper for this class. It will be 9-12 pages or 2,400-3,000 words. It should be formatted in the following way: standard 1" margins, 12 pt. size font, and Times New Roman font. Your citations should be in Chicago Style (this means with either footnotes or endnotes). For your convenience, the professor has uploaded a form to Canvas that discusses proper citation format for Chicago Style. It is called "Formatting Instructions for History Papers." Your paper will be graded according to the following rubric: 40% for evidence, 40% for argument and structure, and 20% for writing.

The professor will give more formal instructions for the paper closer to the due date. For now, you should know that the assignment will require you to compare and contrast two regions or societies of Atlantic Africa that were affected by the rise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. You get to pick which regions or societies your paper will be on, but your selections must be approved by the professor. Your paper should build off the assigned readings for this course, but you are encouraged to bring in a few outside readings as well. The professor has uploaded a form entitled "Supplemental Bibliography" to Canvas with additional readings on each week's topic. This list is a good place to start when looking for additional material. Please note, your paper should make use of both primary and secondary source material.

Final Exam: The final exam can include any and all materials that were covered in the readings, lectures, discussions, and films (if any) since the beginning of the course. The test will be a blue-book exam, and it will be formatted with a combination of Identification or "ID" terms and essay questions. Students will be presented with 10 ID terms from the class, and they will have to define 5 of them by explaining three separate components: who or what the term refers to, where and when the term refers to, and why the term is significant for Atlantic African History in the time period of our class. For the essay part, students will be presented with three possible questions and they will have to write on two of them. These questions will not be revealed until the beginning of the exam. However, each of the questions will be broad and require students to make comparisons across regions and time periods in Atlantic Africa.

Additional Rules:

- 1) **Late Work:** Late work will not be accepted unless in the case of a verifiable medical excuse. Quizzes cannot be made up; however, quizzes and absences may be forgiven with a verifiable medical excuse.
- 2) **Electronics:** Electronics are not permitted to be used in class unless there are special circumstances, verified by the [Student Disability Center](#) (SDC). Taking notes in longhand on paper is less distracting to students around you and [makes it easier for you to remember what you've written down.](#)
- 3) **Medical Excuses:** A medical excuse means a letter from a qualified physician attesting that a debilitating illness or injury has stopped you from fulfilling your duties for this course. Such a letter should not breach medical confidentiality—it should not say what kind of ailment you suffered, just that it was sufficiently severe to prevent you from doing your work. If this happens, you must arrange with the professor to make-up the work that you have missed before the end of the quarter.
- 4) **Course Canvas:** This is a web-enhanced course, which means students will find additional materials posted on Canvas. Students will use Canvas to download the additional readings; access the syllabus, lectures, study guides, and assignment prompts; submit their essays; and check their grades. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for information related to the class. Please note that all papers must be submitted through Canvas and that hard copies will not be accepted.
- 5) **Special Accommodations:** The professor will make special accommodations for students with disabilities as requested by the staff at the [Student Disability Center](#) (SDC). Only SDC staff are qualified to determine eligibility for accommodations and what accommodations are appropriate. If you think you may need such an accommodation, please contact SDC as soon as possible so that they can, in turn, contact the professor and instruct him about how to make the appropriate arrangements.
- 6) **Academic Honesty:** Academic dishonesty violates university policy. Examples of academic dishonesty include: unauthorized sharing of test answers, copying from someone else's test during exams, turning in papers written for another class, and copying from any source without using proper citation, including cutting-and-pasting from websites and then submitting that information as your own. All cases of [plagiarism](#) or other cheating will go to [Student Support and Judicial Affairs](#). Plagiarized or otherwise ethically compromised work will earn a penalty grade of zero for that specific work and may, as judged appropriate by the professor, earn the student an F for the class. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact your professor or the staff at SJA.

CLASS CALENDAR

Please note that the course schedule can be modified at any time.

Week	Dates	Topic & Assignments	Required Readings
1	Thurs. 9/28	An Introduction to Atlantic Africa and the Transatlantic Slave Trade – Two Perspectives	<p>Secondary: Part 1 from John Thornton's <i>Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World</i>, "Africans in Africa" (13-128); and part 4 from Walter Rodney's <i>How Europe Underdeveloped Africa</i>, "Europe and the Roots of African Underdevelopment," (93-146).</p> <p>Primary: Look through Maps of Atlantic Africa in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries</p>

2	Tues. & Thurs. 10/3-5	Case Study of an African Kingdom before the Rise of the Transatlantic Slave Trade – Classical Mali QUIZ #1 (10-5)	Secondary: Chapters 6 & 7 from Vol. 4 of <i>Africa from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century</i> , “Mali and the Second Mandingo Expansion” by Djibril Tamsir Niane and “The Decline of Mali” by Madina Ly-Tall (117-186) Primary: “The West African Journey” from <i>Ibn Battuta in Black Africa</i> , edited by Said Hamdun and Noel King (22-62); and <i>Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali</i> (1-96).
3	Tues. & Thurs. 10/10-12	Case Study of an African Kingdom in the First Centuries of the Transatlantic Slave Trade – Ndongo and Matamba QUIZ #2 (10-12)	Secondary: All of Linda M. Heywood’s <i>Njinga of Angola: Africa’s Warrior Queen</i> (1-258) Primary: None
4	Tues. & Thurs. 10/17-19	Case Studies in Atlantic Africa at the Height of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Part 1 – Societies in “Greater Senegambia” or present-day Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, and Sierra Leone GEOGRAPHY TEST (10-17)	Secondary: Part 2 of Boubacar Barry’s <i>Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade</i> , “Senegambia in the Eighteenth Century: The Slave Trade: <i>Ceddo</i> Regimes, and Muslim Revolutions,” (55-126). Primary: Introduction by Philip D. Curtin and excerpts taken from Thomas Bluett’s <i>Some Memories of the Life of Job</i> (17-59); two selections from Mungo Park’s <i>Travels in the Interior Districts</i> (280-290, 305-320).
5	Tues. & Thurs. 10/24-26	Case Studies in Atlantic Africa at the Height of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Part 2 – The Fante of “The Gold Coast” or present-day eastern Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, and western Togo QUIZ #3 (10-26)	Secondary: All of Rebecca Shumway’s <i>The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade</i> (1-156). Primary: Introduction by Margaret Priestley and excerpts taken from the Letters of Philip Quaque (99-139).

6	Tues. & Thurs. 10/31, 11/2	<p>Case Studies in Atlantic Africa at the Height of the Transatlantic Slave Trade</p> <p>Part 3 – Dahomey of “The Slave Coast” or the “Bight of Benin” of present-day Togo, Benin, and western Nigeria</p> <p>QUIZ #4 (11/2)</p>	<p>Secondary: Chapters 2-4 from Edna G. Bay’s <i>Wives of the Leopard</i> (40-165); and Robin Law’s “The Slave-Trader as Historian: Robert Norris and the History of Dahomey,” (219-235).</p> <p>Primary: Selection from Robert Norris’ <i>Memoirs of the Reign of Bossa Ahádee, King of Dahomy</i>, “A Journey to the Court of Bossa Ahádee” (xiii-xvi, 61-147).</p>
7	Tues. & Thurs. 11/7-9	<p>Case Studies in Atlantic Africa at the Height of the Transatlantic Slave Trade</p> <p>Part 4 – Societies in “The Bight of Biafra” or present-day eastern Nigeria, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, and northern Gabon</p> <p>QUIZ #5 (11-9)</p>	<p>Secondary: Paul Lovejoy and David Richardson’s “Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic History: The Institutional Foundations of the Old Calabar Slave Trade” (333-355); and G. Ugo Nwokeji’s “The Slave Trade, Gender, and Culture” in <i>The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra</i> (144-177).</p> <p>Primary: The diary from <i>The Diary of Antera Duke</i> edited by Behrendt, Latham, and Northrup (133-220); and chapters 1-2 of Olaudah Equiano’s <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> (7-52).</p>
8	Tues. & Thurs. 11/14-16	<p>Case Studies in Atlantic Africa at the Height of the Transatlantic Slave Trade</p> <p>Part 5 – The Kongo in “West-Central Africa” or present-day northern Gabon, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola</p> <p>QUIZ #6 (11-16)</p>	<p>Secondary: All of John K. Thornton’s <i>The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita</i> (1-214)</p> <p>Primary: None</p>

9	Tues. & Thurs. 11/21-23	Atlantic Africans in the Diaspora – Survivals <i>and</i> Inventions QUIZ #7 (11-23) PAPER DUE 11/25, online by 11:59 pm	Secondary: Kristin Mann’s “Shifting Paradigms in the Study of the African Diaspora and of Atlantic History and Culture” (3-21); and Walter Rucker’s “Introduction” and “Slavery, Ethnogenesis, and Social Resurrection” in <i>Gold Coast Diasporas</i> (1-17, 108-143). Primary: Edward Long’s “History of African Insurrections in Jamaica” in <i>The History of Jamaica</i> , Vol. II (444-475); and a report from a special committee of the Jamaican House of Assembly on the occasion of Blackwall’s Revolt (591-596); and spend time exploring Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database .
10	Tues. & Thurs. 11/28-30	An Ambiguous Victory – The Meanings of “Abolition” for Africa and Africans QUIZ #8 (11-30)	Secondary: Introduction to <i>From Slave Trade to ‘Legitimate’ Commerce</i> , edited by Robin Law, (1-31); and selection from “Things Fall Apart: The End of the Eighteenth Century Atlantic World,” in <i>Where the Negroes are Masters</i> (227-239); and G. Ugo Nwokeji’s “Cultural and Economic Aftershocks” in <i>The Slave Trade and Culture in the Bight of Biafra</i> (178-203). Primary: The first half of Ottobah Cugoano’s <i>Thoughts and Sentiments</i> (1-76); and skim the first laws against the Transatlantic Slave Trade: Ordinance Regarding the Slave Trade by the Danish and Norwegian King (1-3); An Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves by the US Government (1-6); and An Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade by British Parliament (1-8);
11	Tues. & Thurs. 12/5-7	The History of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Public Memory QUIZ #9 (12-7)	Secondary: John Kiarie Wa’Njogu’s “Representation of Africa in the Western Media” in <i>Media and Identity in Africa</i> (76-83); Donald R. Wright’s “The Effect of Alex Haley’s ‘Roots’ on How Gambians Remember the Atlantic Slave Trade” (295-318); and Ali A. Mazrui’s “A Preliminary Critique of the TV Series by Henry Louis Gates Jr.” (5-6); Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s “A Preliminary Response to Ali Mazrui’s Critique” (10-14); and Theodore R. Johnson’s III “ Africans have Apologized for Slavery, So Why Won’t the US? ” Primary: Part 1 of <i>Roots</i> from 1977 (90 mins), and Part 1 of <i>Roots</i> from 2016 (90 mins).
12	Thurs. 12/14	FINAL EXAM, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm	