HIS 115A: West African History
The History and Memory of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Introducing Myself and the Class (Tue. 1-8)
“Undergraduates, seduced, as always, by the changing breath of journalistic fashion, demand that they should be taught the history of black Africa. Perhaps, in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none, or very little: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is largely darkness, like the history of pre-European, pre-Columbian America. And darkness is not a subject for history.”


**Africa**
Number of Faculty: 5  
W/O North Africa: 2  
Upper Division courses: 7  
All Pre-1900 Courses: 1

*HIS 15A: Africa to 1900*

**Conclusion:** One country of Europe gets four classes for its history before 1900. By contrast, the entire continent of Africa gets only 1 class for its history before that same period.

**Europe**
Number of Faculty: 11  
Upper Division Courses Offered: 54  
Pre-1900 Upper Division Courses: 35

*HIS 151A: England in the Middle Ages*
*HIS 151B: The Early Modern Centuries*
*HIS 151C: Eighteenth-Century England*
*HIS 151D: Industrial England*
“Contrary to what may be called entrenched popular perception and belief, the slave trade and its abolition are neglected subjects in the writing of West African history and indeed of the history of Africa as a whole...More importantly, the topic does not occupy a prominent enough place in the teaching programs of many of our colleges and universities. I have come across many history and social science graduates who know next to nothing about the slave trade in Africa and its abolition...”

About the Blog

My name is Devia Leigh, and I am a PhD Candidate and teaching assistant in the History Department at the University of California, Davis in Yolo County, California. The Zamani Reader (affectionately known as TZR) is a blog I created in 2014 to be a free and open forum for sharing my academic work in the field of History. This work focuses on the history of Atlantic Africa, the West Indies, and the British Empire in the early-modern period.

I first created TZR on Saturday afternoon, February 1, 2014. It grew out of my experience writing posts for a different blog, called The Laplophant. Historically, when I was an undergraduate student at Loyola University Chicago (LUC), The History Department at LUC has a special emphasis in the field of Public History. This is the study of the production of history specifically for and generally in collaboration with the public.
The origins of a source: Edward Long, Coromantee slave revolts and *The History of Jamaica*

Devita Leigh

**Abstract**

Since the 1960s, historians of the early modern era have been working with colonial sources to uncover the ways that Africans involved in the Gold Coast — often known as 'Coromantee' in the Anglo-American colonies — shaped the history of the Atlantic World. One of the most influential primary sources used in this literature is a 35-page section of the second volume of *The History of Jamaica*, written by the plantationsman Edward Long in 1774. This section, a source of Long's life and work, has been published and unproven, to tell the story of the Coromantee. In doing so, it provides a detailed case study for how a prominent and controversial intellectual acquired knowledge of African culture, and then reappropriated and deployed that knowledge as a tool in the colonial arena. It argues that the political context of abolition is essential to understanding Long's writings on the Coramantees.

**Introduction**

In 1766, the planter-historian Edward Long stood before the Jamaican House of Assembly and presented a bill that would place an impost duty on slaves from the present-day region of Ghana in West Africa, then known as the 'Gold Coast'. The bill would ban the importation of Gold Coast Africans — known in the Anglo-American colonies as 'Coramantees' — from Britain's most profitable overseas colony on the belief that they had been responsible for most of its slave revolts. The Assembly rejected the proposal that day, and Long did not forget it. In 1774, he was living in England and working on what would become the most comprehensive study of Jamaican society in the early-modern era, *The History of Jamaica* in three volumes. When he came to a section that devoted to the 'History of Negro insurrections in this island', he returned to his proposal from 1766. At 32 pages, he wrote more than any author before him on connections between slave rebellion and the Coromantees.

This time, however, his argument was different than it had been eight years ago. Then it had been a private appeal to fellow planters, inspired by a series of recent
Distinguished Visitors @ The AJL:
Devin Leigh

Devin Leigh is a PhD Candidate in the History Department at the University of California, Davis, in the United States of America. He researches the history of the English-speaking Atlantic World during the long eighteenth century, which he dates from roughly the 1600s to the 1800s. His research focuses on issues of connections between West Africa, the West Indies, and Britain. Currently, he is conducting research for his dissertation project. This work is tentatively entitled 'Necessary at This Time? The Politics of African History in an Age of Abolition, 1750-1828.' In this project, Devin examines the lives and works of Britain's African rulers and their influence on the Atlantic world. Two of the figures that he studies were prominent residents of the West Indies.

Devin came to the Caribbean this summer to research his project and network with scholars of Caribbean history. After attending the 38th Annual Conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians in Barbados in March, Devin flew to Trinidad to consult materials held in the West Indies and Slave Collectors (WISSC) Division of the Alma Jordan Library. Specifically, Devin examined minute books for two eighteenth-century coloradist organizations. These are the Society of West India Planters and Merchants and the Society of West India Merchants. These books are preserved in manuscript, under call number S108, as part of the Library's West India Committee Records. These books were originally purchased by the government of Trinidad and Tobago in the late eighteenth century, and the WISSC is the only place in the world that the originals can be seen. They are crucial for helping Devin trace the activities of the named figures in his study.

Devin is grateful to all of the staff here at the Alma Jordan Library for welcoming him into their research community and for accommodating him during his visit to Trinidad and Tobago. The WISSC Division of the Alma Jordan Library is a special institution, and Devin has thoroughly enjoyed his time here.

West India Committee
@WICcommittee

PhD student Devin Leigh discovers unique archive in our library, a letter between two prominent #Jamaican historians dated 1792. #heritage
H15: AFRICA TO 1900
STATES AND SOCIETIES, SLAVERY, AND THE SCRAMBLE
WINTER 2018, LEC: TR 12:10-1:30 PM CHEM 179

With 55 countries, thousands of languages, and a geographic area that surpasses the United States, China, and Europe combined, the defining characteristic of Africa in the discipline. History 15 introduces students to key shifts in the history of Africa up to 1900, including the foundation of states and societies, the spread of Islam and Christianity, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and the onset of European colonialism. Students will examine the continent’s past through oral and written primary sources, scholarly debates, music, film, art, and more.

Contact Professor Corrie Dedier for more information: cdedier@hartford.edu

HIS 115A: West African History
Special Topic: The History and Memory of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

NEW COURSE OFFERED WINTER QUARTER, 2019
WQ, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:45 - 6:00 PM, Hart Hall 1120
Enrollment for this class is limited. Register with CRN 94462 to reserve your spot. If you have any questions or you would like to see the syllabus, please contact the instructor: Devin Leigh at dleigh@hconline.edu