

AFH 3931: AFRICANS IN THE AMERICAS, 1500-1800

Spring 2022

Dr. Philip Janzen

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Office: 494 Grinter Hall

Office Hours: Mon 2:00-4:00

In-person and online via Zoom

Course Schedule:

Tues period 4 and

Thurs periods 4/5

0115 Rolfs Hall

and online via Zoom

Course Overview

Between 1492 and 1808, Africans represented the largest immigrant stream to the Americas, outnumbering Europeans by a ratio of more than 3:1. This course surveys the history of the African presence in the Americas until 1808, when the English outlawed the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Rather than emphasizing the economy and demography of the slave trade, this course explores the many ideas, institutions, and cultures that not only arrived with Africans in the Americas but shaped the Atlantic world.

Learning Objectives

This course will allow students to develop one of the central skills of historical thinking—the ability to imagine the world from the perspective of someone in circumstances different than one’s own. Through lectures, readings, and assignments, students will learn to read and write critically about the history of the African presence in the Americas. Students will leave the course with a grounding in *how* to think about the African diaspora as well as an understanding of *why* this is important.

Required Course Texts

James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (UNC, 2011).

The Sweet book is available online through the UF library. It is also on reserve at Library West. Links to all other readings can be found on the Canvas course website.

Evaluation

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|------------------------------------|-------|------|
| • Assignment #1: Article Précis | (15%) | 2/11 |
| • Assignment #2: Midterm Essay | (20%) | 3/3 |
| • Assignment #3: Historical Marker | (15%) | 3/31 |
| • Assignment #4: Final Essay | (20%) | 4/20 |
| • Writing Journal | (10%) | --- |
| • Participation | (20%) | --- |

Procedure

This is a HyFlex course, meaning that you may attend class in-person or online via Zoom. I will not be recording class sessions.

Tuesday classes will be lectures and Thursday classes will be a combination of lectures and discussions based on the assigned readings. I expect you to attend the lectures, complete the weekly readings, and participate actively in discussions. Your participation grade is based on quality contributions to class discussions.

If you have questions about the course, please first consult this syllabus. You may also come to my office hours or contact me by email. I will do my best to respond within one business day.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Introduction to the Course

1/6 **Lecture:** Review Syllabus; Defining the African Diaspora

Reading: Colin A. Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora" *Perspectives on History* (1998).

Week 2 Slavery and Economy in Africa

1/11-1/13 **Lectures:** African slavery and economies before European arrivals; Regions and ports

Reading: John K. Thornton, "Slavery and African Social Structure," in *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (1998): 72-97.

Week 3 The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas: Why Africans?

1/18-1/20 **Lectures:** European background to the Atlantic slave trade; Fifteenth-century European slavery

Reading: James H. Sweet, "The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought," *William and Mary Quarterly* (1997): 1-24.

Video: "The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross. Episode 1: The Black Atlantic (1500-1800)"

Week 4 Enslavement and the Middle Passage

1/25-1/27 **Lectures:** Overview of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade; Social death

Reading: Stephanie Smallwood, "Turning African Captives into Atlantic Commodities," in *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (2007): 33-64; Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *American Historical Review* 114 (2009): 1231-1249.

Week 5 Primary Sources and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

2/1-2/3 **Lectures:** Primary sources and the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade; Story of Olaudah Equiano

Reading: Olaudah Equiano, "Chapter 2," in *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano at:*

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/equiano1/equiano1.html#p45>

Vincent Carretta, "Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa? New Light on an Eighteenth-Century Question of Identity," *Slavery and Abolition*, 20, 3 (1999): 96-105; Paul Lovejoy, "Autobiography and Memory: Gustavus Vassa, alias Olaudah Equiano, the African," *Slavery and Abolition* 27 (2006): 317-347.

Week 6 Africans in the Markets of the Atlantic

2/8-2/10 **Lectures:** Worlds of work; Urban and rural; Case studies in Jamaica, South Carolina, Brazil

Reading: Stuart Schwartz, "Sugar Plantation Labor and Slave Life," in *Slaves, Rebels, and Peasants* (1992): 39-63; William Dusingberre, "Mothers and Children," in *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps* (2000): 235-247; Caroline Grego, "The Search for the *Kayendo*: Recovering the Lowcountry Rice Toolkit," *The American Historical Review* (September 2021): 1165-1183.

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE ON 2/11

Week 7 Gender and Sexuality in Africa and the Diaspora

2/15-2/17 **Lectures:** Gender and Sexuality in Africa and the Diaspora; Gender expressions and motherhood

Reading: Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 26 (2008): 1-14; Sasha Turner, "'The Best Ones Who Are Fit to Breed': The Quest for Biological Reproduction," in *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica* (2017): 44-67.

Week 8 Kinship, Lineage, and Family

2/22-2/24 **Lectures:** Kinship and Lineage in Africa and the Americas; Shipmates and runaway communities

Reading: Walter Hawthorne, "'Being now, as it were, one family': Shipmate bonding on the slave vessel Emilia, in Rio de Janeiro and throughout the Atlantic world," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 45 (2008): 53-77.

Week 9 Review for Midterm Essay

3/1-3/3 Review for Midterm Essay

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE ONLINE 3/3

Week 10 Spirituality, Religion, and Healing in Africa

3/15-3/17 **Lectures:** Religion and healing in Senegambia, Bight of Benin, and Central Africa

Reading: James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*, Chapters 1-5

Video: "A Reasonable Man" (1999)

Week 11 African Healing in the Diaspora

3/22-3/24 **Lectures:** Transformations in African Healing in Brazil, St. Domingue, and New York

Reading: Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*, Chapters 6-10

Week 12 Runaway Communities, Rebellions, and Revolution

3/29-3/31 **Lectures:** Maroons, and Rebels in Brazil, the Caribbean, and Central America; The Haitian Revolution

Reading: Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event," in Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (1995): 70-107.

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE 3/31

Week 13 Language, Oral Traditions, Islam

4/5-4/7 **Lectures:** Language diffusion and oral traditions; African language vocabularies and dictionaries; Islam in the African Diaspora

Reading: Olabiyi Yai, "Texts of Enslavement: Fon and Yoruba Vocabularies from Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Brazil," in Paul E. Lovejoy, ed. *Identity in the Shadow of Slavery* (2000): 102-112; Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 59-87.

Week 14 Social Hierarchies and Creolization

4/12-4/14 **Lectures:** Africans and African Americans; African, Ladino, or Creole?; The end of the Slave Trade and Creolization

Reading: Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*, 186-214, 244-290.

Week 15 Review for Final Essay

4/19 Review for final essay

ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE 4/20

OTHER NOTES

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	E	Below 60

For information regarding current UF policies for assigning grade points, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Health and Wellness Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit counseling.ufl.edu/ or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Learning in a Pandemic

As with the past four semesters, this spring will bring more stress and anxiety than usual, for both faculty and students. In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- Attendance: If you are sick, stay home and self-quarantine. If you are able, attend class via Zoom. I will not penalize you if you have to miss class, but you must let me know. I will give you a reasonable amount of time to make up work. Frequent unexcused absences will result in a low participation grade.

- Masking: You are expected to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated.
- Vaccinations: If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available at no cost and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. [Visit this link](#) for details on where to get your shot. Students who receive the first dose of the vaccine somewhere off-campus and/or outside of Gainesville can still receive their second dose on campus.
- Sanitizing supplies: They are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- If you are sick: please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire, and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email covid@shcc.ufl.edu) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website](#) for more information.
- Withheld: If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is [available here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or at [this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).