

LAH/WOH 4930: History Research Seminar: Writing Slaves' Lives
Spring 2025

<p>Instructor: Dr. Fernanda Bretones Lane Contact: f.bretones@ufl.edu Office Hours: T 2:30-4:30 PM & W 9:00-10:00 AM (or by appointment) GRINTER 333</p>	<p>Class meetings: Tuesdays (11:45 AM - 1:40 PM) & Thursdays (12:50 PM - 1:40 PM) Classroom: FLI 111</p>
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DESCRIPTION:

The History Research Seminar introduces students to the historians' craft. Students are expected to read extensively on the seminar topic, and to produce their own original, substantial research paper developed out of primary sources.

This particular research seminar centers histories of enslaved people in Latin America and broader Atlantic world. The first half of the course revolves around close reading of books and selected primary sources that illuminate key themes in the history of slavery, with special attention to the recent proliferation of historical biographies. Central to the course are theoretical and methodological considerations with regards to writing histories of traditionally marginalized individuals whose voices have been largely silenced. How can we examine the lived experiences of enslaved individuals? What sources are available and what methodologies do professional historians employ to analyze them? Throughout the semester—but especially so on the second half—students will research and write an original, substantial research paper developed out of primary sources.

OBJECTIVES:

- Understand the methods for writing subaltern history and familiarize yourself with the range of primary sources available to study the lived experiences of enslaved people in Latin America and the Atlantic world
- Identify research topics
- Critically analyze primary and secondary sources
- Improve writing and oral communication skills
- Master research skills
- Pursue original research in primary and secondary sources to produce a substantial paper
- Engage in the peer-review process

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

- Trevor Burnard, *Writing the Global History of Slavery*
- Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*
- Sophie White, *Voices of the Enslaved*

- Henry Lovejoy, *Yorùbá Kingship in Colonial Cuba During the Age of Revolutions*
- Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World*
- Junia Furtado, *Chica da Silva: A Brazilian Slave of the Eighteenth Century*
- Randy Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*
- Students will also be required to consult the following online resource: Patrick Rael, *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students* (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004) available at <https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>

Required books are available electronically through UF Libraries, except for Randy Sparks's *The Two Princes of Calabar*. Students are advised to obtain a copy of this title as soon as possible (available at the UF bookstore and various online vendors). Other required readings will be available in Canvas and/or distributed in class.

COURSE FORMAT & EXPECTATIONS

As the capstone course of the History major, the research seminar is the most rigorous and demanding course our students take in the Department (unless they plan to join the History Honors Program). The expectations are high: students must read at least one book per week (sometimes supplemented with additional materials, assigned in class or as homework); take turns leading the in-class discussion; and work independently on a lengthy research paper. There are expectations, too, for consistent, informed, and active engagement in class discussion (sitting in silence through an entire class period is not acceptable). Attendance at scheduled class meetings is mandatory and the Professor must be notified of any absences ahead of time. The success of a research seminar rests on students' commitment to meeting these expectations.

ASSIGNMENTS:

{Full assignment guidelines in Canvas}

- Seminar Participation 30% distributed as follows:
 - Seminar leadership, once in the semester (15%)
 - Weekly participation, holistic evaluation (15%)
- Oral Presentation 5%
- Peer-Review 5%
- Research project 60% distributed as follows:
 - abstract with bibliography (5%)
 - rough draft (10%)
 - final paper (45%)

GRADING SCALE

A	100 %	to 94.0%	C	< 77.0 %	to 74.0%
A-	< 94.0 %	to 90.0%	C-	< 74.0 %	to 70.0%
B+	< 90.0 %	to 87.0%	D+	< 70.0 %	to 67.0%
B	< 87.0 %	to 84.0%	D	< 67.0 %	to 64.0%
B-	< 84.0 %	to 80.0%	D-	< 64.0 %	to 61.0%
C+	< 80.0 %	to 77.0%	F	< 61.0 %	to 0.0%

GRADING CRITERIA

A Work that goes beyond instructor's expectations: is careful, thoughtful, original, and thorough. Truly outstanding work – even for a “good” student.

A- Very good work with most of the attributes of “A” work but either deficient in some technical aspect, in thoroughness and care or not as strikingly incisive, original, or creative as “A” work. Excellent.

B+ Better than good, competent work, even for the typical student at this university. Some aspects are very strong, but not uniformly excellent.

B Good competent work, which meets all standards/requirements the instructor could specify in advance. Reasonably thorough. Alternatively, work with some excellent aspects that are balanced by serious deficiencies.

B- Almost up to specifiable standards. Often characterized by vagueness and signs of lack of effort or insufficient engagement with the material. Sometimes the result of correctable misunderstanding. Sometimes the result of truncate writing that could improve with more attention/work. Talk to instructor.

C+ Below the specifiable standards for good work. Sometimes the result of poor writing that compromises quality of the work/clarity of ideas. Talk to instructor.

C Work showing serious misunderstanding or lack of effort or engagement. Talk to instructor

C- or below: Talk to instructor immediately. A final grade of C- does not count as a passing grade for major requirements.

Current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#gradestext-otp1>

COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

1) Office Hours

- I hold regular Office Hours (check schedule) and you are all welcome to drop by during office hours! This is the best way to reach me outside of class.
 - **What are office hours for?** This is a time when my door is open to students (on a first-come first-serve basis) to discuss issues pertaining to the class (content questions, clarifications, attendance issues, research assistance, etc), or other topics such as request for recommendation letters, inquiries about Honors Thesis advising, questions about going to graduate school, your general interests in Latin American history, etc. or if you want to know more about my current and future research projects and course offerings.
 - Please note, conflicts in schedule involving University-related business, academic obligations, health issues, or medical appointments may occasionally result in cancellation of Office Hours in a particular week. You will be notified if that happens.
 - If you are unable to attend office hours and you have questions/concerns that have not been addressed in class and cannot be answered by consulting the syllabus, send me an email to request an appointment (limited availability).

2) Communicating via email

- If you are unable to attend Office Hours and you have pressing concerns/questions that cannot wait for an alternative meeting time, send me an email at f.bretones@ufl.edu. Provide enough information for me to assist you.
- It is the students' responsibility to check messages on both Canvas and their UF email regularly for important information relating to the course, and to respond in a timely fashion when necessary.
 - Please email from your @ufl.edu account—I do not respond to student messages from non-UF accounts.
 - I generally check and respond to emails once daily during the workweek, between 8am-5pm. Please allow up to 24 hours for a response.
 - Professors love to hear from students, but keep in mind that emailing your professors is not the same as emailing (or texting) your friends. For some useful tips on how to email Professors, see "[How to Email Your Professor \(Without Being Annoying AF\)](#)".

3) Canvas Messages

- I do not read or respond to individual messages sent via Canvas. Please use one of the two methods noted above to communicate with me. You may receive messages and announcements in Canvas from me when the content is relevant to the whole group.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

[subject to change]

Readings must be completed before the first class meeting of each week

Week 1 – Jan. 14 & 16 Patrick Rael, “Predatory’ Reading” and “How to Ask Good Questions,” in *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students* (Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 2004), available at <https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>

Week 2 - Jan. 21 & 23 Trevor Burnard, *Writing the Global History of Slavery* (you are required to read these selected excerpts: pp.8-34; pp.40-64. You are welcome to read the whole book)

Week 3 – Jan. 28 & 30 Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself* & VISIT TO UF SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

On Thursday, Jan. 30, the class will visit Special Collections to learn about primary sources available at UF. Meet directly in Smathers 100 (Library East, ground floor) at 12:50PM.

Week 4 – Feb. 4 & 6 Jon Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World* with a very special visit by the author on Thur. 2/6

Week 5 - Feb. 11 & 13 Sophie White, *Voices of the Enslaved* & the companion website *Voices of the Enslaved: A Digital Humanities Approach to Encountering the Archive* at https://oireader.wm.edu/open_oj/voices-of-the-enslaved/

Week 6 – Feb. 18 & 20 Henry Lovejoy, *Yorùbá Kingship in Colonial Cuba During the Age of Revolutions*

Week 7 – Feb. 25 & 27: Junia Furtado, *Chica da Silva: A Brazilian Slave of the Eighteenth Century*

Week 8 - Mar. 4 & 6 Randy Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*

Week 9 - Mar. 11 & 13 In-class Workshops

Assignment due: 500-word abstract containing thesis statement and an additional bibliography, including preliminary primary and secondary sources. Hard copies due in class 3/11 and electronically via Canvas.

WEEK 10 – Mar. 18 & 20 SPRING BREAK

Week 11 – Mar. 25 & 27 RESEARCH WEEK. Prof. Bretones will be available for individual consultations (by appointment only)

Week 12 - Apr. 1 & 3 RESEARCH WEEK Prof. Bretones will be available for individual consultations (by appointment only)

Week 13 Apr. 8 & 10: RESEARCH WEEK

Assignment due: Paper rough draft due 4/8 9am via Canvas (at least 10 pages plus an outline for sections to be written)

Week 14 – Apr. 15 & 17 Lightning-Round Oral Presentations *Assignment due:* oral presentations

Each student will give a short (3-5min/each) oral presentation to the class about their papers (a template will be provided), and will receive feedback from the group.

Week 15 Apr. 22 – Peer Review

Assignment due: hard copy of full paper draft, due at start of seminar meeting on 4/22. Peer review worksheet due at the end of class.

FINAL PAPER DUE APRIL 28 9 AM**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION (AKA GATOR EVALS)

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 at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. 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 via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

UNIVERSITY’S HONESTY POLICY REGARDING CHEATING, PLAGIARISM, AI, ETC.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See

the UF Conduct Code website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

You are required to submit your own original work. Work that raises questions about authenticity, including papers generated by AI (ChatGPT and the like), is subject to further scrutiny to verify authorship (including, but not limited to: oral examination by the Professor to assert originality of the ideas; presentations of sources; re-writing the assignment by hand, in the Professor's office).

CLASS POLICY REGARDING ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of computers and other electronic devices is not allowed in the physical classroom, except when required for assignments as detailed in the syllabus. Students should plan accordingly, and bring pen and paper to lectures to take notes and, when possible, print copies of the readings. This decision relies on pedagogical studies that show that, unless essential for the subject of the course, [multitasking](#) on a laptop during class hinders users and nearby peers' learning and can result in [lower testing grades](#). Studies also suggest that [taking notes in longhand](#) improves information processing and retention. Students should also be prepared to bring print copies of the required course materials.

CLASS POLICY REGARDING IN-CLASS RECORDING

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Campus Resources

Here are some resources to help students navigate campus life:

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/> or call 392-1575

Hitchcock Field And Fork Food Pantry: For anyone experiencing food insecurity, with no requirement to verify income or need. <https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>

The Molm Family Gator Career Closet: An on-campus, lending closet for students to borrow professional clothing and accessories free of charge. Valid with UF ID <https://career.ufl.edu/closet/>

Police Department: 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies) <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

The Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

Disability Resource Center (DRCaccessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu | 352-392-8565) helps to provide an accessible learning environment for all by providing support services and facilitating accommodations, which may vary from course to course. Once registered with DRC, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling <https://career.ufl.edu/>

Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.