

**HIS3942**  
**History Practicum:**  
**Slavery in the British Atlantic World**



Professor Matthew Blake Strickland  
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**Class Time & Location**

T Periods 5-6 (11:45-1:40)

Th Period 6 (12:50-1:40)

FLI 119

**Office Hours**

T/Th 10:30-11:30 (or by appointment)

FLI 233

**Course Description**

This practicum serves a few purposes. First, this will be your introduction to the field of history and to the department at UF. Second, you will explore the craft of history and understand how and why historians approach historical sources and topics. Third, this course will use the topic of slavery in the British Atlantic as a basis for understanding the study of the field. You will better understand the main themes of the topic as well as how to analyze historical trends.

What is history? What do historians do? How do we understand the past? Generally, historians use primary sources to reconstruct an understanding of the past. While grasping some aspects of history can be simple or straightforward, the practice of researching, analyzing, and writing about historical concepts is more complex. This course will provide an introduction to these advanced skills in the discipline. These are skills that will help you as you complete your major studies at UF and beyond after graduation.

Atlantic slavery holds a unique place in world history. Historians have distinguished the chattel slavery of this region with other forms of forced labor found around the globe. This class will focus on the enslavement, transport, and labor of African people in the Anglo-speaking Atlantic region. In particular, we will examine the Middle Passage, the rise of plantation systems, and the culture and daily lives of enslaved people. Comparisons will be made between the British Atlantic and other Atlantic Empires. Additionally, we will compare the forced labor found in the Atlantic region to other forms of forced labor as it existed in particular times and places in world history.

### Course Objectives

With this course, students will:

1. Understand how and why Britain turned toward African slavery.
2. Understand the way African people were enslaved and transported to the Americas.
3. Examine the lived experiences of enslaved people in Anglo-American colonies.
4. Analyze the pro- and anti-slavery arguments of people in the British Empire.
5. Practice the skills of a historian in analyzing and discussing primary and secondary sources.
6. Make concise arguments in both written and oral form.
7. Think critically and analytically regarding historical people, events, themes, and documents.

### Required Texts

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (10<sup>th</sup> Edition)

Other required readings are available on Canvas. They are also noted in the course schedule attached to this syllabus.

### Grading Scale and Assignment Summary

Attendance	10%
Participation	10%
Writing Assignments	40%
Research Prospectus	15%

Only course grades of C or better will satisfy Gordon Rule, general education, and college basic distribution credit.

**Mandatory Meetings:** You are required to meet with me during office hours twice during the semester. The first meeting must take place within the first four weeks of the semester while the second meeting must take place within the last four weeks. These meetings serve two purposes: 1) they allow me to get to know you and you to get to know me, and 2) these are opportunities for students to get help or insight before major assignments are due. Both should be short check-ins (5-10 minutes). While attending these meetings will not be graded, a failure to complete this requirement will result in a grade deduction.

### Course Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

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

Attendance:

In order to ensure success in this course, it is imperative that you attend all class meetings. Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class. Without showing up to class, you cannot fully participate.

**Tardiness:**

Come to class on time. Tardiness causes unnecessary distractions for the teacher and for students attempting to engage with the course. While it may be unavoidable sometimes, no student should be late a majority of the class. I understand this is a large campus. However, you must develop a schedule that is logistically possible (i.e. that which allows you to move quickly from one place to another).

**Participation:**

For the purposes of this class, participation means you are **actively** contributing to the discussion. This could include probing questions, insights regarding readings, or making connections across multiple weeks in the course. All of these involve communicating to me and the rest of the class that you are prepared and engaged with the lectures and/or material.

**Late Work:**

All assignments should be turned in by the due date. The instructor may accept late work for a ten-point deduction for every day the assignment is late. However, it is not guaranteed that the instructor will accept late work. It is the student's responsibility to communicate problems or concerns with the instructor.

**Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism constitutes intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. It is the failure to properly cite and give credit when you use the ideas, words, phrases, or arguments of other people in your writing assignments. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." For more information regarding the Honor Code, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://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.

**Course Evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.

**Objectivity and Classroom Respect:**

People learn best when they are encouraged to ask questions and express their diverse opinions on course content which may include images, texts, data, or theories from many fields. This is especially true in courses that deal with provocative or contemporary issues. UF offers many such courses, in which students encounter concepts of race, color, sex, and/or national origin. We teach these important issues because understanding them is essential for anyone who seeks to make economic, cultural, and societal contributions to today's complex world. With this in mind, we do not limit access to, or classroom discussion of, ideas and opinions-including those that some may find uncomfortable, unwelcome, disagreeable, or even offensive. In response to

challenging material, students and instructors are encouraged to ask honest questions and thoughtfully engage one another's ideas. But hostility, disruptive and disrespectful behavior, and provocation for provocation's sake have no place in a classroom; reasonable people disagree reasonably. These guidelines can help instructors and students as they work together to fulfill the mission of the University of Florida, which includes the exploration of intellectual boundaries, the creation of new knowledge and the pursuit of new ideas.

## **HIS 3942 Assignments**

\*Standard Formatting: Times New Roman; 1-inch margins on all sides; 12-point font; double-spaced; no extra indentions or line spacings beyond what is appropriate in writing mechanics.

### **“Why History Is Important” short paper (due 8/29) [5%]**

Imagine you are traveling by plane. You enter a conversation with the person sitting next to you, who is very curious to know why you want to study history. This person cannot understand why you study history when so many other disciplines are faster tracks to money-making professions. In a two-page essay (standard formatting), develop an argument that history is worth the effort and can lead to a life-fulfilling profession. You need to explain to this person: 1) why history is important as a subject of study in and for itself; and 2) why teaching history is in fact a key component of any profession. A hard copy will be due in class and a digital copy will be submitted on Canvas to check through Turnitin. Absolutely no use of AI to write or “help” write this paper. Come to class prepared to discuss. This assignment is worth 5% of your overall grade.

### **Secondary Source Analysis I (due 9/9) [10%]**

Historiography is the history of the historical writings of an event, person, or idea. Read the four articles about the turn to African slavery. In a short paper (3-4 pages; standard formatting), compare the main arguments of these historians. How are they similar? How are they different? Why have historians come to different conclusions about why Europeans turned toward African slavery? Which historian(s) do you most agree with? You must bring a hard copy to class to be graded, and you must submit a digital copy on Canvas to be checked through Turnitin. Absolutely no use of AI to write or “help” write this paper. Come to class prepared to discuss these articles and the idea of historiography. This assignment is worth 10% of your overall grade.

### **Primary Source Analysis (due 9/26) [10%]**

You will read six primary sources about the Middle Passage. Write a short paper (2-3 pages; standard formatting) that analyzes the documents. You must put the documents into conversation with each other. By using all of these documents together, what do you learn about the slave trade? How do these documents complement each other? How do these documents contradict each other? What impact does “time period” have on understanding the content of a document? Which document(s) do you find most “reliable,” and why? You must bring a hard copy to class to be graded, and you must submit a digital copy on Canvas to be checked through Turnitin. Absolutely no use of AI to write or “help” write this paper. Come to class prepared to discuss these documents and your understanding of historical evidence. This assignment is worth 10% of your overall grade.

### **Student-Alumni Conference and Reflection (due 10/2) [10%]**

See next page for more details.

### **Midterm Exam (in class on 10/14) [10%]**

Students will have a midterm exam to practice a variety of exam options as a history major.

### **Secondary Source Analysis II (due 10/17) [10%]**

Read the three articles about the “Black Rice” thesis. In a short paper (2-3 pages; standard formatting), compare the main arguments of these historians. How are they similar? How are they different? Why have historians come to different conclusions about the contributions of African people to rice cultivation in the Americas? Which historian(s) do you most agree with? You must bring a hard copy to class to be graded, and you must submit a digital copy on Canvas to be checked through Turnitin. Absolutely no use of AI to write or “help”

write this paper. Come to class prepared to discuss these articles and ideas of slave labor. This assignment is worth 10% of your overall grade.

**Book Review (due 11/20) [10%]**

Using library resources, you must find a book about slavery in the British Atlantic. It can be broadly about this topic or it can contend with a subtopic (i.e. a specific British colony; religion; gender; biography; etc.). Your chosen book does not necessarily need to be vetted by the instructor. However, if you are unsure that your book fits the requirements, reach out and your instructor will happily provide feedback. After a book has been selected, you will write a book review that 1) examines the author's main arguments, 2) shows how the author structures their narrative, and 3) analyzes the sources used. This paper must be 4-6 pages and follow standard formatting. For help with writing book reviews, see Rampolla, ch. 3d. You must bring a hard copy to class to be graded, and you must submit a digital copy on Canvas to be checked through Turnitin. Absolutely no use of AI to write or "help" write this paper. This assignment is worth 10% of your overall grade.

**Annotated Bibliography (due 12/5) [15%]**

You will create an annotated bibliography on slavery in the British Atlantic. Your bibliography must include ten to fifteen secondary sources (books, articles, or chapters). You should have a balanced mixture of all these types of sources (i.e. do not give me 10-15 chapter entries from one edited volume). Each entry needs a paragraph-length annotation. You must follow proper formatting for bibliographic entries (review Rampolla ch. 3b and ch. 7). You will only submit a digital copy on Canvas. Absolutely no use of AI to write or "help" write this assignment. This assignment is worth 15% of your overall grade.

**Research Prospectus (due 12/5) [20%]**

A research prospectus is basically a paper where you tell your audience (i.e. your professor) what you will do in a final research paper. To be clear, you are not writing a final research paper. This is an exercise wherein you are thinking about how you might conceptualize a research topic in the future (something you will have to do in your senior seminar before graduating). You may not have all the answers yet, but the prospectus provides a guideline for how your research may potentially appear in its final form. Your prospectus will address three questions: what, why, and how. **What** is the history that you are proposing to explore, and **what** is the context? **What** are you claiming? **Why** is this topic important? **Why** is it necessary for you to explore this topic? Have other scholars not paid particular attention to this topic? Are there gaps in our understanding? **How** are you going to prove your claims? **How** are you going to organize and present your information? What are the primary sources about this topic? **How** will you access those documents? Are there any challenges in obtaining or analyzing these documents?

The prospectus should be 8-10 pages using standard formatting. The bibliography is excluded from this page count. This assignment will be worth 20% of your total grade. You will only submit a digital copy on Canvas. Absolutely no use of AI to write or "help" write this paper. This assignment is worth 20% of your overall grade.

## Student-Alumni Conference and Reflection (10%)

As part of your development as a history major, this course emphasizes not only historical thinking but also professionalization and the ability to translate your academic skills into meaningful post-graduate experiences. To that end, you are required to attend our Student-Alumni Conference on **Saturday, September 27, 2025**. At the conference, alumni working in various fields will reflect on their careers and offer guidance to students exploring possible futures.

Following that conference, you will write a reflection that will be due on **Thursday, October 2, 2025**.

To receive credit, you must:

- Attend the conference in Keene-Flint on Saturday, 9/27/2025, 8:30am-1:00pm
- Use the form provided at the welcome table to “sign in” for attendance purposes
- Join two panels (one per block) and actively engage with the presentation content
- Write a 750-1000-word reflection [approx. 3-4 pages] about the experience.

Your reflection should be thoughtful, well-organized, and demonstrate engagement with the presentations. You may write this using first person, but it should still be polished and professional in tone, following proper grammar and stylistic guidelines.

Please address the following prompts in your reflection:

1. **Panels Attended:** Briefly identify which panels you attended and which alumni stood out to you. What fields were represented?
2. **What You Learned:** What insights did you gain about careers available to history majors? What surprised you? Were any assumptions challenged?
3. **Personal Relevance:** How did the presentations resonate with your current academic path, interests, or career questions? Did you see yourself in any of the panelists?
4. **Advice and Takeaways:** What practical advice or strategies did you take away? What suggestions did alumni offer that you might follow up on now or in the near future?
5. **Historical Training and Careers:** How did alumni describe the usefulness (or limitations) of historical training in their work? What did this teach you about the value of your degree?
6. **Next Steps:** What specific steps do you want to take following the conference? This may include things like seeking an internship, visiting the career center, joining a student organization, or reaching out to alumni.

Use paragraph structure and complete sentences. You may include quotations or paraphrased advice from the alumni, but citations are not required. Please utilize my Standard Formatting guide [see syllabus]. Be honest and reflective. Your grade will be based on thoughtfulness, clarity, and writing, not on having the “right” answers. The use of AI to write or “help” write your reflection is strictly prohibited.

## Alternative Assignment (For Excused Absences Only)

Attendance at the Student-Alumni Conference is a required component of this course. However, if you have a legitimate and unavoidable conflict, you may request an alternative assignment in advance. Approval is at the discretion of the instructor and must be requested by **Monday, September 22, 2025**.

### Requirements for Approval

1. Submit a written explanation of your conflict to the instructor via email.
2. Await formal approval.

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Upon approval, you must complete the alternative assignment (to be provided through Canvas), which will be related to career readiness as a history major and will require a writing component (~1200-1500 words)



## Course Schedule

\*This schedule may change.

Th 8/21 Course Introduction	- Access the syllabus on Canvas
T 8/26 Slavery and the British Empire: An Overview	
Th 8/28 Why Study History?	Students will complete before class: - Sam Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts" [Canvas] - Rampolla, ch. 1  <b>DUE: "Why History Is Important" short paper</b>
T 9/2 Atlantic History and Analyzing Geographical Frameworks	Students will complete before class: - David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History" [Canvas] - Richard B. Allen, "Satisfying the 'Want for Labouring People': European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850" [Canvas] - Peter A. Coclanis, "Beyond Atlantic History" [Canvas]
Th 9/4 History as Academic Discipline	Students will complete before class: - Pojmann, "The Development of the Discipline of History" - Watch the History Department video ( <a href="https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/0282dba0d6e44570878743e3af47def11d">https://mediasite.video.ufl.edu/Mediasite/Play/0282dba0d6e44570878743e3af47def11d</a> ) - Explore the department website ( <a href="https://history.ufl.edu/">https://history.ufl.edu/</a> )
T 9/9 Slavery in Africa and the Middle Passage	
Th 9/11 Reading and Writing Strategies and "Reliability"	- Rampolla, chs. 2-3 - Patrick Rael, "How to Read a Secondary Source" [ <a href="https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-secondary-source/">https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-secondary-source/</a> ] - Rael, "Predatory Reading" [ <a href="https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/predatory-reading/">https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/predatory-reading/</a> ]
T 9/16 Historiography and the Turn to African Slavery	Students will complete before class: - Eric Williams, "Economics, Not Racism, as the Root of Slavery" [Canvas] - David Eltis, "The Cultural Roots of African Slavery" [Canvas] - David Brion Davis, "Ideas and Institutions from the Old World" [Canvas] - Linda M. Heywood and John K. Thornton, "European and African Cultural Differences" [Canvas]

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**DUE: Secondary Source Analysis I**

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Th 9/18 Analyzing Primary Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rampolla, ch. 3c</li> <li>- Review Rampolla, ch. 2b</li> <li>- Rael, "How to Read a Primary Source" [<a href="https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-primary-source/">https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/reading/how-to-read-a-primary-source/</a>]</li> </ul>
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T 9/23 Diverse Experiences of the Slave Trade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "John Atkins details the British slave trade in Guinea, 1735" [Canvas]</li> <li>- "James Penny describes the Middle Passage to Parliament, 1789" [Canvas]</li> <li>- "Olaudah Equiano provides an African view of enslavement, 1789" [Canvas]</li> <li>- "William Snelgrave on slave mutinies, 1734" [Canvas]</li> <li>- "The <i>Zong</i> insurance case, 1783" [Canvas]</li> <li>- Mahommah Gardo Baquaqua, "An African's Ordeal" [Canvas]</li> </ul>
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**DUE: Primary Source Analysis**

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Th 9/25 Slave Trade Database, Digital History, and Statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You may bring a computer/tablet to access the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database [<a href="http://www.slavevoyages.org">www.slavevoyages.org</a>]</li> <li>- You may also explore the website before coming to class, though it is not required.</li> </ul>
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<b>Saturday 9/27 Student-Alumni Conference</b>	<b>Attendance at this conference is mandatory for this course. Please look at the requirements on Canvas.</b>
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T 9/30 Early Slave Laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Barbados Slave Law [Canvas]</li> <li>- Various Virginia Slave laws [Canvas]</li> <li>- South Carolina [Canvas]</li> </ul>
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Th 10/2 Plagiarism	- Rampolla, ch. 6
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**DUE: Conference Reflection**

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T 10/7 The Rise of the Plantation System	
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Th 10/9 Exam Prep	- Rampolla, ch. 3f
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T 10/14 Midterm Exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You will complete your Midterm Exam</li> <li><b>*Bring a bluebook* [exam book]</b></li> </ul>
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Th 10/16 Writing Conventions	- Rampolla, ch. 4
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T 10/21	
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Enslaved People and Labor	
Th 10/23 Historians Debate the Black Rice Thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Peter H. Wood, "Black Labor – White Rice" [Canvas]</li> <li>- Judith Carney, "The African Roots of American Rice [Canvas]</li> <li>- David Eltis, Philip Morgan, and David Richardson, "Problems with the 'Black Rice' Thesis" [Canvas]</li> </ul>
DUE: Secondary Source Analysis II	
T 10/28 Enslaved Women	
Th 10/30 Using Library Databases	- Rampolla, ch. 5
T 11/4 Slave Life: Religion & Community	- Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, "The Americas: The Survival of African Religions" [Canvas]
Th 11/6 Racial Distinctions	- Gad Heuman, "The Free Coloreds in Jamaican Slave Society" [Canvas]
T 11/11 Resistance, Rebellion, and Maroon Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gad Heuman, "Runaway Slaves in Nineteenth-Century Barbados" [Canvas]</li> <li>- Richard Price, "Maroons and Their Communities" [Canvas]</li> </ul>
Th 11/13 No Class	<b>No Class</b> <b>I will be presenting my research at a conference in Canada, so we will not meet today.</b>
T 11/18 Abolition and Emancipation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alonso de Sandoval, "Questioning Slavery's Morality" [Canvas]</li> <li>- Adrian Hastings, "Black Abolitionists" [Canvas]</li> <li>- Osei Bonsu and Eyo Honesty II, "African Opponents of Abolition" [Canvas]</li> <li>- Michael Craton, "Slave Revolts and the End of Slavery" [Canvas]</li> </ul>
Th 11/20 Course Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bring a computer, tablet, phone, etc. to class to complete the course evaluation.-</li> </ul>
DUE: Book Review	
T 11/25 Thanksgiving Break	
Th 11/27 Thanksgiving Break	
T 12/2	No class.

Work Day	Use today to work on your final prospectus and annotated bibliography.
F 12/5 Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography Due	Your final research prospectus and annotated bibliography are due on Canvas by 11:59pm.