

AFR 374E/ AMS 370  
**Atlantic Slavery: History and Memory**  
Thompson  
Fall 2018

**Course Description:**

What would it mean to consider the emergence of a United States national identity (and other national identities) from the perspective of the intersecting trade routes and shifting imperial projects constituting what scholars have called the Atlantic World? What would it mean to consider the emergence of global capitalism through the particular lens of the transatlantic slave trade and the diversity of labor and production regimes it spawned? This course places the overarching processes of domination and dehumanization arrayed on behalf of European and US empire and against African peoples alongside the various sites of struggle and resistance in which people of African descent articulated and enacted visions of freedom. In doing so, it details how the conditions for a politicized black diasporic identity have emerged from contexts of cultural and linguistic diversity among African-descended populations. This course charts a history of Atlantic slavery by focusing on primary sources detailing crucial events and contexts such as the Zong Massacre (1791); the Haitian Revolution (1804); and the Amistad Revolt (1839) among others. It also considers how historians, memoirists, fiction writers, visual and performance artists and filmmakers have come to terms with that history and its implications, especially regarding the moral, political, and economic investments nations and empires have made in the commodification of human beings.

**Assignments:**

3 response papers (2-3 pages), <b>DUE September 13, October 2, October 25</b>	<b>10% each</b>
final paper description and outline (2 pages), <b>DUE November 15</b>	<b>10%</b>
Presentation	<b>15%</b>
Final paper (8-10 pages), <b>DUE December 10</b>	<b>25%</b>
Participation, preparation, and attendance:	<b>20%</b>

This course carries the **Global Cultures** flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one non-U.S. cultural group, past or present.

This course carries the **Writing** flag. Writing flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity

to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.

**Written Projects:** Because this course carries a writing flag, I expect students to pay particular attention to the quality of their written work. I have assigned three short papers and one longer paper. Please use the short papers as occasions to hone your technical skills, taking advantage of the short length to practice making succinct arguments and supporting them in a well-focused way.

**Final grades will be assigned on a plus/minus basis where A: 93 and above; A-: 90-92.99; B+: 87-89.99; B: 83-86.99; B-: 80-82.99; C+: 77-79.99; C: 73-76.99; C-: 70-72.99; D+: 67-69.99; D: 63-66.99; D-: 60-62.99; F: 59.99 and below**

**Paper Format:** Papers must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins.

**Make-Up Policy:** Extensions on the graded assignments will be granted **only** in the case of a medical or family emergency, or if you have official, documented University of Texas business (including intercollegiate athletics) outside of campus. You must notify me **before** the due date; failure to do so will result in the automatic subtraction of a letter grade. Assignments turned in late without an excuse will lose one letter grade for each day past the due date.

**Preparation and participation:** This class is reading-intensive. I will help you prioritize by indicating from class to class which readings are most essential, and I will try to prepare you for some of the most challenging readings. Try to get an early start on each of the longer texts; do NOT try to read them in their entirety the night before the discussion classes. Come to class prepared with questions! These questions should not be of the “yes or no” or hypothetical variety. Their aim should be to open up conversation about the reading. The success of this course depends on your prepared-ness and your active participation! Please don't let each other down! Failure to contribute in some way will significantly impact your grade.

**Civility:** Much of our class time will be spent in discussion. Therefore it is important that we show respect for each other by being attentive and polite. I encourage spirited debate but expect that we will be civil in all our discussions. Class will begin promptly at 3:30. Please be on time—late arrivals distract discussants.

**Academic Dishonesty** includes but is not limited to cheating; plagiarism (the appropriation of another's work and unauthorized incorporation of that work in one's own written work offered for credit); and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing college work offered for credit). These acts will be subject to academic penalties.

**Special Needs Policy:** Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

**Texts available for purchase at the University Co-op include:**

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*  
Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*  
M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*  
Charles Johnson, *Middle Passage*  
Zora Neale Hurston, *Barracoon*

Shorter readings will be posted on Blackboard and/or available as a course reader

**Reading and Discussion Schedule**

**August 30:**                    **Introduction to Course**

**September 4:**                **Desires and Demands**

Reading:                      Mintz, excerpt from *Sweetness and Power* (Canvas)

**September 6:**                **Interior Dealings**

Reading:                      Smallwood, “Introduction” and “Chapter 1: The Gold Coast and the Atlantic Market in People” in *Saltwater Slavery*  
Hartman, “Chapter 10: The Famished Road” in *LYM*

**September 11:**               **Money and Exchange**

Reading:                      “Chapter 11: Blood Cowries” in *Lose Your Mother*

**September 13:**               **The West African Littoral**

Reading:                      Equiano, “Chapter 1 and Chapter 2,” *The Interesting Narrative...*  
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/equiano1/equiano1.html>  
Hartman, “Chapter 2: Markets and Martyrs” and “Chapter 6: So Many Dungeons,” *LYM*

**\*\*\*Paper 1 Due\*\*\***

**September 18: Commodification**

Reading: Smallwood, "Chapter 2: Turning African Captives into Atlantic Commodities" and "Chapter 3: "The Political Economy of the Slave Ship" in *SS*  
Look at: Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database  
<http://slavevoyages.org/>  
In class: Hank Thomas Willis, pieces from *Pitch Blackness*

**September 20: Anglo-American Abolitionism**

Reading: *Somerset v. Stewart*, excerpt (Canvas)  
*Gregson v. Gilbert*, excerpt (Canvas)

**September 25: The Zong Massacre**

Reading: M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*

**September 27: Dead Calm**

Reading: Hartman, "Chapter 7: The Dead Book" *LYM*; Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts" *Small Axe*, (June 2008), 1-14 (Canvas)

**October 2: Shipmates and Intimacies**

Reading: Smallwood, "Chapter 4: The Anomalous Intimacies of the Slave Ship" *SS*  
Marcus Rediker, "Chapter 9: From Captives to Shipmates" in *The Slave Ship: A Human History*, 263-307 (Canvas)

**\*\*\*Paper 2 Due\*\*\***

**October 4: Disembarkations**

Reading: Smallwood, "Chapter 5: Turning Atlantic Commodities into American Slaves"  
Equiano, Chapters 3-7  
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/equiano1/equiano1.html>

**October 9: Resistance on the High Seas, the *Amistad* case**

Reading: Osagie, "Introduction" xi-xvii and "Part I: Remembering the Past," 3-68 in *The Amistad Revolt* (Canvas)  
Kevin Young, selections from *Ardency: A Chronicle of the Amistad Rebels* (Canvas)  
In-Class Film: "The Amistad" (1999), dir. Steven Spielberg

**October 11:           The Amistad**

In-class Film: "The Amistad" (1999), dir. Steven Spielberg (cont.)  
Discussion

**October 16:           The Atlantic Sacred**

Reading: Jacqui Alexander, from *Pedagogies of Crossing* (Canvas)  
In-class Film: Maya Deren, "Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti" (footage from 1950s)

**October 18:           Haiti: History and Memory**

Reading: Trouillot, "Chapter 3: An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event," in *Silencing the Past*, 70-107. (Canvas)  
selections from Dubois and Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804* (Canvas)  
In-class: Jacob Lawrence, *Toussaint L'Ouverture* series (1986-1997)

**October 23:           Middle Passage as Satire**

Reading: Charles Johnson, *Middle Passage*, "Entry the First" through "Entry the Fourth," pgs. 1-99

**October 25:           Middle Passage as Satire (cont.)**

Reading: Charles Johnson, *Middle Passage*, "Entry the Fifth" to the end, pgs. 100-209.

**\*\*\*Paper 3 Due\*\*\***

**October 30:           The Idea of Kinship 1**

View Film at home: *Family Across the Sea* (1990) (discussion in-class)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnuB10PO64k>

**November 1:           The Idea of Kinship 2**

Reading: Hartman, "Prologue: The Path of Strangers," "Chapter 3: The Family Romance," "Chapter 4: "Come, Go Back, Child," "Chapter 5: The Tribe of the Middle Passage," and "Chapter 8: Lose Your Mother," in *LYM*

**November 6: Kinship and Diaspora**

Smallwood, "Chapter 6: Life and Death in the Diaspora" in *SS*  
Hartman, "Chapter 1: Afrotopia," "Chapter 9: The Dark Days," and  
"Chapter 12: Fugitive Dreams" in *LYM*

**November 8 NO CLASS: ASA Annual Meeting**

**November 13: The Last Slave Ship**

Reading: Zora Neale Hurston, *Barracoon*

**November 15: Student Presentations**

**\*\*\*\*Outlines and Summaries DUE**

**November 27: Student Presentations**

**November 29: Student Presentations**

**December 4: Student Presentations**

**December 6: Student Presentations**

**DECEMBER 10: Final Paper Due**