

Course Syllabus

[Jump to Today](#)

HIST UN3928.001: Comparative Slavery and Emancipation in the Atlantic World

Professor Natasha Lightfoot

Spring 2018, Mondays 2:10-4:00pm, 311 Fayerweather Hall

nlightfoot@columbia.edu (https://oldcourseworks.columbia.edu/cms/input/messages/mailform.cfm?user_key=56475824&whois=00001653-326F-12A7-95AE834771578000&iruyxd=21695296&lkirty=16&mailto=nlightfoot@columbia.edu&emailtype=individual) (email)| Mon 12:45-2:00pm FAY (office hours)|1-5915 (phone)

Course Description: This seminar investigates the experiences of slavery and freedom among African-descended people living and laboring in the various parts of the Atlantic World. The course will trace critical aspects of these two major, interconnected historical phenomena with an eye to how specific cases either manifested or troubled broader trends across various slaveholding societies. The first half of the course addresses the history of slavery and the second half pertains to experiences in emancipation. However, since the abolition of slavery occurs at different moments in various areas of the Atlantic World, the course will adhere to a more thematic and less chronological structure, in its examination of the multiple avenues to freedom available in various regions. Weekly units will approach major themes relevant to both slavery and emancipation, such as racial epistemologies among slaveowners/employers, labor regimes in slave and free societies, cultural innovations among slave and freed communities, gendered discourses and sexual relations within slave and free communities, and slaves' and free people's resistance to domination. The goal of this course is to broaden students' comprehension of the history of slavery and freedom, and to promote an understanding of the transition from slavery to freedom in the Americas as creating both continuities and ruptures in the structure and practices of the various societies concerned.

Course Requirements: The final grade will be based on the following:

- Class participation (discussion, attendance and in-class presentation) [10%]
- Talking Points [15%]
- One 4-5pg. reading review [20%]
- A 15-20 pg. final paper [55%]

Talking Points: Students should submit (via post to the Courseworks website under the Discussion Board tab **and** as an attached pdf) at least three talking points on the texts for discussion in class by **5pm on Sunday** prior to the course meeting. Over the course of the semester, students must submit a total of **six** sets of talking points to contribute to their participation grade, three from the first half of the semester and three from the second half. Talking points can be posed in the form of a detailed question or a paragraph-long comment on an issue of relevance you discern within the assigned texts. **You should be prepared to**

elaborate further on the talking points you have raised in class.

Reading Reviews: Students must complete one longer reading review on the assigned texts for the unit of their choice, due via post as a **PDF** to the assignments tab on Courseworks **by 1:30 pm** on the day of the course meeting during which the texts are being discussed. These papers should thoroughly review the major arguments of each text and also critically assess these arguments in the wider context of what the course has covered thus far. [4-5 typed double-spaced pages.]

Presentation & Participation: In general, all students are highly encouraged to speak during every course meeting, and will be called upon if they remain quiet for too long. Quiet students may be brilliant but their participation grade will suffer. Students are also expected to consistently attend class; if course meetings are missed, it will affect your final grade. Lastly, each student should prepare a 5-10 minute presentation on their chosen final paper topic, to be given in class during the last course meeting, **April 30, 2018**.

Final Paper: Final papers can be based on one of the themes from the weekly unit (or it can be on another topic of the student's choosing, with advance approval of the instructor). These papers should incorporate **at least 5 book length studies** beyond those contained in the syllabus, should assess comparatively 2 distinct Atlantic World slave societies (so that three studies each pertain to each of the chosen two areas), and can either be a historiographical review of the arguments the authors advance, or an exploration of an original argument of your own using both primary and secondary sources. Students are required to submit an ungraded **proposal & annotated bibliography**, offering at least a paragraph-long description of the intended final project, specifying the research question being approached. It should also list at least **5 book length studies** that will be used to support the project, with a description for each title that conveys the work's main points and its relevance to your project. For those using primary sources, the bibliography should also contain a list of the sources under consideration, where they are housed (if unpublished) and a description for each source or archival collection that describes its content and relevance to your project. The proposal is due electronic post as a PDF to the assignments tab on Courseworks by 5pm on **Fri March 9, 2018**. Optional drafts of the final paper can be submitted on or before **Wed April 25, 2018** as PDF via email directly to the professor. Final papers are due on **Friday May 4, 2018** via electronic post as a PDF to the assignments tab on Courseworks. [15-20 typed double-spaced pages.]

Course Guidelines:

Written Work: All written work for this class must conform to the following guidelines:

- Double spaced with one-inch margins, and in 12-pt font.
- All sources must be cited and all citations must be in the form of **footnotes or endnotes**. Guidance on proper citation format can be found in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers*.
- All papers should be submitted as PDF attachments to the appropriate tab in Courseworks.

Deadlines: Students are expected to turn in all assignments completed and on time, which is at the **beginning** of class on the specified due date. **Lateness as a rule should be avoided at all costs. In the case of lateness, students will be docked a half letter grade for each day a paper is late, starting the day after it was due.** (e.g., a paper due Monday but turned in Tuesday starts at an A-, and starts at a B+ if turned in on Wednesday, and so forth).

Plagiarism and Cheating: Students enrolled in this course are obligated to maintain standards of academic

integrity. Violations of academic obligations include unethical practices and acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, or the facilitation of such acts. Cheating includes giving or receiving any unauthorized aid or giving or receiving any unfair advantage on any form of academic work. Plagiarism is the use of another's ideas or words, or both, as if they were one's own. The use of ideas or direct quotations from others is, of course, acceptable with appropriate citation of source. The instructor will immediately fail the student who has cheated or plagiarized his or her work, and will pursue the appropriate university channels to initiate any disciplinary measures.

In-Class Conduct:

- Always be on time and be prepared for course meetings.
- Always complete readings and bring them with you to class.
- No food and no cellphones in class. **[No exceptions]**
- Always feel free to ask questions and make comments in class.
- Always respect the views of others, whether you agree or not.

Course Texts: The following texts will be available for purchase at Book Culture (536 W 112th St btwn B'way & Amsterdam, 212-865-1588) and are on reserve at Butler. Note that all assigned articles will be available via the files & resources tab on Courseworks:

Stephanie M.H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004)

Celso Castilho, *Slave Emancipation and Transformations in Brazilian Political Citizenship*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016)

Frederick Cooper, Thomas Holt, and Rebecca Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000)

Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868-1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999)

Aisha K. Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba: La Escalera and the Insurgencies of 1841– 1844* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015)

CLR James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Overture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1963)

Natasha Lightfoot, *Troubling Freedom: Antigua and the Aftermath of British Emancipation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015),

Sowande' Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage* (University of Illinois Press, 2016)

James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

Weekly Readings and Discussion Topics:

Jan 22: Introduction to Course**Jan 29: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Early Slave Society in the Americas**

Readings: Sowande' Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage* (University of Illinois Press, 2016) and Jennifer L. Morgan, "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan., 1997): 167-19.

Feb 5: Slave Religion and Culture

Readings: James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006) and Herman Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570-1640* (http://www.amazon.com/Africans-Colonial-Mexico-Christianity-Consciousness/dp/0253342368/ref=si3_rdr_bb_product) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), Introduction and Chapter 6.

Feb 12: Resistance, Accommodation, and Acts Falling in Between

Readings: Stephanie M.H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004); Marisa Fuentes, "Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen's Troubled Archive," *Gender & History* 22 (2010): 564-584; and John Edwin Mason, "Hendrik Albertus and His Ex-Slave Mey: A Drama in Three Acts," in *The Journal of African History* 31.3 (1990): 423-445.

Feb 19: Slave Revolution and the Seizing of Freedom

Readings: CLR James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Overture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1963), and Walter Johnson, "Time and Revolution in African America," in Kathleen Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity, and Modernity in Britain and the Empire, 1660-1840* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 197-215.

Feb 26: Slave Women's Voices Heard & Obscured: Atlantic Slave Narratives

Readings: Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave Related by Herself* (1831), [see <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/prince/prince.html>] (<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/prince/prince.html>) for full text]; Kremena Todorova, "'I Will Say the Truth to the English People': *The History of Mary Prince* and the Meaning of English History," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 43.3 (2001): 285-302; Sojourner Truth and Olive Gilbert, *Narrative of Sojourner Truth, a Northern Slave, Emancipated from Bodily Servitude by the State of New York, in 1828* [see <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/truth50/truth50.html>] (<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/truth50/truth50.html>) for full text]; Nell Irvin Painter, "Representing Truth: Sojourner Truth's Knowing and Becoming Known," *The Journal of American History* 81.2 (Sep. 1994): 461-492.

Mar 5: No Class, Work on Paper Topics**Fri Mar 9: **Paper Topic Proposal & Annotated Bibliography due to Courseworks****

Mar 12: Spring Recess, No Class**Mar 19: Quotidian Forms of Freedom**

Readings: Natasha Lightfoot, *Troubling Freedom: Antigua and the Aftermath of British Emancipation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

Mar 26: Geographies of Resistance and Struggles for Freedom

Readings: Aisha K. Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba: La Escalera and the Insurgencies of 1841–1844* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015) and Yuko Miki, "Fleeing into Slavery: The Insurgent Geographies of Brazilian Quilombolas (Maroons), 1880-1881," *The Americas* 68, no. 4 (April 2012): 495-528.

April 2: Race, Emancipation and Independence Wars

Readings: Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation and Revolution, 1868-1898*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); and Marixa Lasso, "Race War and Nation in Caribbean Gran Colombia, Cartagena, 1810-1832," *American Historical Review* 111.2 (2006): 336-361.

April 9: State Domination and the Limits of Freedom

Readings: Frederick Cooper, Thomas Holt, and Rebecca Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2000) and Carolyn A. Brown, "Testing the Boundaries of Marginality: Twentieth-Century Slavery and Emancipation Struggles in Nkanu, Northern Igboland, 1920-29," in *The Journal of African History* 37.1 (1996): 51-80.

April 16: Freedpeople's Political Activism and the Struggle for Citizenship

Readings: Celso Castilho, *Slave Emancipation and Transformations in Brazilian Political Citizenship*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016) and Elsa Barkley Brown, "Negotiating and Transforming the Public Sphere: African-American Political Life in the Transition from Slavery to Freedom," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton University Press, 2000), 28-66.

April 23: The Legacy of Slavery, Emancipation and Race




Readings: Gary Wilder, "Race, Reason, Impasse: Cesaire, Fanon, and the Legacy of Emancipation," in *Radical History Review* 90 (Fall 2004): 31-61 and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event," in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 70-107; Aime Cesaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* (1947), excerpt; Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952; reprint New York: Grove Press, 1967), Chapter 5, "The Fact of Blackness," 109-140.

Wed April 25: Optional Paper Drafts due to Professor Lightfoot by 5pm.

April 29: **In Class Presentations on Paper Topics and Final Discussion**

Fri May 4: **Final Papers Due as PDF to Courseworks by 5pm.**

Course Summary:

Date	Details
Fri Mar 9, 2018	 Final Paper Proposal (https://courseworks2.columbia.edu/courses/53058/assignments/139967) due by 5pm
Fri May 4, 2018	 Final Paper (https://courseworks2.columbia.edu/courses/53058/assignments/139969) due by 5pm
	 Reading Review (https://courseworks2.columbia.edu/courses/53058/assignments/139965)

